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FRANK JEWETT MATHER, JR.

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"Young Woman Opening a Casement," by Vermeer.
In the Metropolitan Museum, New York City.

ESTIMATES IN ART

BY

FRANK JEWETT MATHER, JR.

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WITH TEN REPRESENTATIVE ILLUSTRATIONS

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TO

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WHO HAS EVER AIDED ME TO
ADJUST THE VALUES OF ART TO THOSE
OF THE TRUEST LIVING

CONTENTS

CLAUDE LORRAIN: TEACHER

The breadth and monumentality of his landscape sketches, 3, 4—Their technical defects, 4—Technic is always adequate to the creative emotion that evokes it, 5, 6—Vision versus mere doing, 7, 8.

SANDRO BOTTICELLI

His recent rehabilitation, 11—Surrounding Tuscan influences, 12—Some family considerations, 13–15—Apprenticeship with Fra Filippo, 16–20—Pollaiuolo's influence, the "Chighi Madonna," "Judith," "Holophernes Dead," 21–23—"Adoration of Magi" and "Primavera," 24–31—Other mythologies, 32–33—The "St. Augustine," 34—The Sistine decorations and the later manner, 35–36—The melancholy phase, the "Calumny," 37–39—The Dante drawings, 39–41—Concerning Savonarola, 41, 42—The Munich "Pietà," 43—Conflicting estimates on Sandro, 44, 45—His linear rhythm, 45–47—His fantastic individualism, 50–54.

EL GRECO

Revival of interest in him a by-product of recent symbolism, 57–59—Some biographical facts, 60–63—His Byzantine background, 63–64—Titian's teaching, 64–67—The spirit of Toledo, 67–69—The "Expolio," 69—The New York "Adoration of the Shepherds," the Zuloaga "Vision of St. John," 70–72—His lighting, 72, 73—The problem of his extravagance, 74—The "Burial of Count Orgaz," 74–76—How shall we regard his abnormality? 77–80.

GOYA AND HIS ART

The rawness of Goya, his "Military Execution" and Delacroix's "Massacre at Scio" compared, 83–85—The legend of his diabolism, 85–87—His beginnings at Zaragoza, Madrid, and Rome,

88–92—At Madrid, Mengs as patron, the tapestry cartoons, 93–95—The city and court at Madrid, 95–96—His gallantries, the Duchess of Alba, 98–99—The etched series of "Caprichos," 100–106—Developed portraiture, 107—The two Majas, 108–111—The family group of Charles IV, 111–113—The Napoleonic wars, "Los Desastres de la Guerra," 113–115—The household on the Manzanares, 116—The flight to France, 117, 118—Goya's views on painting, 119—The value in his painting, the antithesis of impulse and discipline, 120–123.

REMBRANDT AFTER THREE CENTURIES, 1906

Diverse counsels on Rembrandt, 127—His darkness visible, 128–129—Early realistic studies, 129—His etchings, 130—As illustrator of the Bible, 131–132—Light as beauty, 132–133.

VERMEER OF DELFT

His artistic resurrection, 137–140—Mr. Hale on his impersonality, 140–142—Analysis of his subject-matter, 143–145—Vermeer, chivalric feminist, 145–147—His forms of lighting and composition, 147–153—His feminism once more, 153–154—Italianate beginnings, 154–157—Feeling for a style, "The Procuress," 157—The lyrical precisian, 158–159.

THE PAINTING OF SOROLLA

The furor of 1910, 163, 164—The issue of delicacy in art, 165–168—Sunlight in haste, 168–171—A digression on impressionism, 172–177—The superficiality of Sorolla's painting, 178–181.

EUGÈNE CARRIÈRE

Carrière, theorist, the maxim of universal sympathy, 185–188—His portraiture as record of admirations, 189–190—Maternity his chief theme conceived in terms of sacrifice, 191–193—Typical quality of his portraiture, 193–194—Biographical details, 195–196—The Carrière "fog," 197—As attenuation of his poignancy, 199—The sublimation of his means, Lafcadio Hearn on a similar prose style, 201, 202—Limitations as decorator and colorist, 202–205—His un-French qualities and mystical views on art, 205–208.

WATTS AND HIS ART

Discordant views on Watts, 211, 212—His affinities with the old masters, 213—His writings, 214—Beginnings as an historical painter, 215–216—Florentine days, 216—London, his pertinacity and public spirit, 218–220—His creation of a neo-Christian mythology, 221–222—His plan for the "House of Life," 223, 224—the "Justice" at Lincoln's Inn, 225–226—The famous symbolic pictures enumerated, 226–227—Watts on art critics, 227–228—Merits of his technic, 228–231—The Victorian mood and his religion, 231–234—Nature of his religious symbolism, 234–236—Its dignity, warmth, and value, 236, 237.

JOHN LA FARGE—AN APPRECIATION

La Farge as cosmopolitan and arbiter, 241–243—Studies with William Hunt, landscapes, illustrations, 244–245—His scholarship and eclecticism, 245–247—Revives the Renaissance workshop, 247–249—Mural decorations for Trinity Church, Boston, St. Thomas's, the Cornelius Vanderbilt house, and Minneapolis, 249–251—La Farge's conversation, its range and charm, 252–254—La Farge as writer, 255–257—His inventions in stained glass, 257–261—The Polynesian sketches, 262–263—His universality perhaps accounts for his relative failure to get public acclaim, a painter-aristocrat, 263–265.

FAR EASTERN PAINTING

China: Contrast between the painting of the West and of the Far East, 269–271—Elusiveness and distinction of the Chinese manner, romanticism tempered by convention, 271–272—Brief survey of T'ang, Sung, Yuan, and Ming styles, 272–274—The earliest hieratic figure-painting, 274–276—Chinese landscape, its panoramic character, the rolls, 276–278—Psychological bond between figures and landscape, 278—More literal types of landscape, 279—Fantastic types, Chao Po-kiu's masterpiece of the "Haunted Isles" at Paris, 280–281—Color and monochrome, northern and southern styles, 281–282—Kuo Hsi on the value of landscape, and conclusion, 282–284.

Japan: Restlessness of Japanese art as compared to Chinese, 284—Its tendency to excess of sensibility begins in the Fujiwara

period, ninth to twelfth century, 286–289—The later periods, Yamoto, art of the crowd, Kamakura, Ashikaga, briefly sketched, 289–292—The Ashikaga revival of the Sung style, Zen philosophy, the painting of Sesshu, 292–297—From Sesson to the Kano masters, 297—The pure æstheticism of Sotatsu and Kôrin, its element of decadence, 297–299—The popular, Ukiyo-ye, style the ultimate phase, 299–300—The principle of unity between Far Eastern and Western art, some analogies, 301–302.

Color-Prints of Japan: Critics of Japanese prints, Fenollosa's rating of the masters, 303–304—Mistakes of the early European collectors, 304—Japanese scorn of the Ukiyo-ye prints contrasted with Western admiration, 305–307—Technical beauties of the color-prints, 308–311—Accidental beauties, 312—The fleeting world of the color-prints, its alleged perils, its positive attractions, 314—The issue of frivolity, 315.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Vermeer, "Young Woman Opening a Casement," Metropolitan Museum, New York City . . *Frontispiece*

FACING PAGE

2. Claude Lorrain, "View of Tivoli," British Museum, London 6

3. Botticelli, Detail from "Birth of Venus," Uffizi, Florence 32

4. Botticelli, "Madonna and Saints," Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin 38

5. El Greco, "Entombment of the Count of Orgaz," Church of St. Thomas, Toledo 70

6. Goya, "Clothed Maja," Prado, Madrid 98

7. Goya, "The Toreador Pedro Romero," in the Collection of Mr. Archer M. Huntington 108

8. Vermeer, "The Music Lesson," Windsor Castle, England 152

9. Carrière, "Maternité," Luxembourg, Paris 192

10. La Farge, "Moses Receiving the Law on Mt. Sinai," Capitol, St. Paul, Minn. 250

I

CLAUDE LORRAIN: TEACHER

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A book that has had its day in Germany describes Rembrandt as teacher (*Rembrandt als Erzieher*), but I think an honest survey of any considerable group of his paintings, such as that exhibited in the Metropolitan Museum, would only warn off the wise artist in whatever medium. Rembrandt seems so solitary, inapproachable, inimitable. In his wake lies nothing but shipwreck for us. Possibly our painters and men of letters would do better to take counsel of that more accessible genius, Claude Lorrain. I once had the privilege of turning over many sheets of his sketches, not such superb examples as Mr. Roger E. Fry has illustrated in his admirable monograph on Claude, but just a lot of those little notes which he constantly made to record his impressions or fix his memories.

It would be hard to imagine anything more edifying than these little notes in ink and sepia. On a palm's breadth of paper you see a river valley winding its way into the roots of distant mountains. Or again you catch the

sense of wind and rain and broken light over square miles of rolling champaign. Or, perhaps, a few sparse objects—a tree, a castle, a mountain ridge—are set down so justly that one feels the vast stretches of intervening air. These, despite his detractors, are the well-recognized merits of Claude in his slightest as in his monumental work.

But the defects of these drawings seem even more instructive. Yes, Ruskin, brutally in error on the main issue, was right in minuter specifications of dissent. How perfunctory are the tree forms and foreground indications generally; any one of a score of League students could give these objects more character. The handling of the wash is slow, timid, and almost casual; fifty contemporary illustrators could do the thing more crisply. In short, the magic of the hand is almost absent from these sketches. They are in a manner ill done—and supremely, inapproachably lovely. The fact may well give pause to a generation of artificers that has sought salvation mainly in the cunning of the hand.

The superlative detail has long been assiduously preached. It has almost been assumed that the law and gospel of the literary art were summed up in the commandment: Make

unique and lovely phrases; of painting, in the formula: Let your touch be exquisite. Perhaps this particularism is based on a rather stupid adherence to the talk—not the practice, mind you—of Flaubert in letters and of Manet in painting. There seem to be souls simple enough to imagine that *Madame Bovary* is a great book because of its incidental rhetoric. As a matter of fact, only its relentless movement and massiveness have kept it alive. The intolerable labor of the file with which Flaubert tortured himself is largely labor lost. Manet is, indeed, exquisite in every detail, but the merit lies always in the balanced impact of the whole composition. In other words, it is the intellectualized vision of the man, and that only, which gives worthy employment to the sensitive hand.

Now, the dilemma of every artistic life is to strike the just balance between reflection and execution. Obviously, execution cannot safely be neglected. Even Claude attained a decent adequacy in this regard. And because he refused to do more, his case is peculiarly instructive. It is as if he felt so keenly the importance of the original constructive vision that he declined to blunt or complicate it through executive processes too painful or too prolonged.

Ingres once said rather stupidly that to draw a picture was everything, and that the painting went of itself. Claude may be imagined as saying that to see pictures was everything—to see them with utmost clarity and fervor—and that the rest was largely a tedious superfluity. The doctrine is perilous, but, as a personal maxim at least, Claude's practice fully justifies it.

Yes, the constructive side of art is the important one, and, to-day, whether in criticism or in formal instruction, the most neglected. Let no one who has thought and felt a work clearly, despair lest adequate means of expression be denied him. Let him merely beware of mistaking diffused ambition for clarified vision. History gives us no record of a truly creative soul denied adequate means of expression. We may amuse ourselves by wishing for a more athletic Claude or a Watts obedient to the teachings of Couture, but it is folly. What painter who talks glibly to this end would venture practically to alter or efface a single stroke of a Claude seaport or a Watts portrait? No, we must take our geniuses as they come. The danger is quite the other way—that hundreds of aspirants with really nothing to say may attain a specious technical

"View of Tivoli," from a Drawing by Claude Lorrain.

In the British Museum, London.

facility, and thus impose their emptiness upon us.

And right here I counsel every young person who is painting or writing to study Claude drawings. You, sir, accomplished spinner of phrases; you, sir, skilful combiner of planes and values, may test yourself against these little sheets of yellowed paper. If you loftily scorn these modest works for the phrases you fancy you could amend, there is no hope for you. Go on being just one more clever, futile person, and pray merely that the abyss of your own emptiness may never be fully revealed to you. If, on the contrary, you can feel the large harmony of design, the fervid sanity of conception, in these little drawings, the experience may mark for you the beginning of artistic righteousness.

To regain the lost capacity for monumental design is the problem of modern art in whatever branch. Claude may well be a leader to take us from the levels of cheese-paring ideas to the upland of genial creation. From him, and partly, as we have seen, in virtue of his defects, we may learn that it is composition and mass and meaning, in the broadest sense, that really count in picture, novel, or pediment. Withal—again by reason of his defects—Claude

is a most available guide. What heights he reached, although troubled by a certain weakness of heart! Some such vantage-point surely must be accessible to those of us who boast of our temperament, if only we can subordinate it to a fine and purposeful intelligence. We need, in short, to look inward toward the springs of vision, and concern ourselves less with doing. Long before Claude, the ordeal of the artist was suggested in the words: "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." When an artist thinketh nothing in his heart, the art, whatever its specious appearance or repute, will be—according.

II

SANDRO BOTTICELLI

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Giorgio Vasari was until recent times the last critic who prized the exquisite art of Sandro Botticelli. To have been great and so long forgotten is a pledge of sensational rediscovery. But in a day of rehabilitations, that of Botticelli has been singularly complete and durable. Upon the discreet imitations of the English Preraphaelites, followed the guarded apologia of Crowe and Cavalcaselle, only to give way, in turn, to the sentimental inferences of Walter Pater, to the fervid championship of Ruskin, and to Mr. Maurice Hewlett's graceful and penetrative musings. I pass the dozen or more works in erudition, or semi-erudition, that have illuminated or obscured the theme. Mr. Berenson has carried the matter into the field of general ideas. Mr. Herbert P. Horne, Botticelli's most thorough biographer, shows a prudent predilection for facts.

We first meet Sandro Filipepi, the fourth son of Mariano the Tanner, in a tax return of 1457, which tells that the boy was thirteen years old, still at his books, and in poor health.

Vasari assures us that Sandro had the usual schooling, and specifies the "three R's," but in the main we must suppose that he was self-educated, and, like a true Florentine, largely through the reading of that compendium of all grave doctrine, the *Divine Comedy*. At a later time we know that Sandro denied the possession of a soul to a rash 'prentice, who, without letters, ventured to hold opinions upon Dante. Through association with such humanists as Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici, for whom Botticelli began to work in his thirty-third year, and Poliziano, who inspired the composition of the "Birth of Venus," the aspirations of the classical revival were communicated to the young master. The year in Rome, his thirty-seventh, left an enduring impression in certain grandiose forms of architecture. No master of the time except Mantegna was better versed in antiquity, and the Florentine kept the advantage of loving his Rome naïvely. Loving it too well to archæologize, he glimpsed it fervidly through a genuinely Tuscan pair of eyes. Indeed, it is worth noting that the idiomatic quality is equally strong in his work, whether he treats a stock subject of the Middle Ages, or a mythological fantasy of the newest humanistic coinage. His mature inventions

bespeak poise and self-mastery. His latest work indicates an unwholesome detachment—perhaps that sudden reckoning with mortality which makes many a perfected craftsman seek fanatically new and strange perfections. It is a phenomenon that we may study in so well-ordered a genius as that of Titian. Botticelli began a course that should have conducted him parallel with his younger contemporary Leonardo, only to finish as the most reactionary spirit that lived on into the so-called Golden Age. "The Calumny" was painted while the "Last Supper" was being designed. Thus Botticelli must be classed with those who have made some "great refusal," not, like the Dantesque shade, "from cowardice," but from inner stress that dashes them athwart the easy grooves of their age.

No sign of this, however, in Sandro's beginnings. He was articled with the most popular painter of the time, Fra Filippo, and actually learned his trade from the most progressive, Antonio Pollaiuolo.

The painter's life, let us recall, had then none of the Bohemian glamour with which it has since been invested. To keep a shop, to calculate justly cost of materials and day's works, to undertake obligingly the humblest commis-

sions was a virtue of an artist as of a greengrocer. Botticelli's contemporaries valued him for reasons which seem trivial or erroneous today. And while we may flatter ourselves that we judge more truly, they at least were without sentimental prepossessions. We, for example, praise particularly his delicately fantastic vein. This was lauded by Vasari, who remarked Sandro's *stravaganzie*, but the few thoughtful critics reckoned him as a sturdy realist. His immediate associates regarded him chiefly as a wag. The early biographers collected assiduously anecdotes of his practical jokes upon his pupils, neighbors, and even the Priorate of Florence. In his own family his capacity must have been primarily that of an uncle. In the tanner's house behind Ognissanti, where Sandro lived out his life, there were two sets of nephews and nieces, ten in all, between the ages of five and nineteen. The grandfather, according to the tax returns of 1481, was eighty-six years old, his sister-in-law, seventy. The eldest son, Giovanni, was sixty years old, a broker, and we may judge unprosperous, for his young daughters are all entered as "without dowry." The second brother, Antonio, aged fifty-one, had drifted from a goldsmith's bench into the more uncertain trade of book agency. His daughters, too, were por-

tionless. The third brother, Simone, Sandro's senior by a year, was seeking employment in Naples. When the family was complete there were twenty mouths. Doubtless the cramped establishment was very neat after the Florentine fashion, but it surely would have been listed by a modern district visitor. One maid was the only servant, and she was more favored than her small mistresses, for in three years her marriage portion, in expectancy of which she had engaged for a term of years, would be paid. In short we have to do with a typical bourgeois family of old or, for that matter, of new Florence, sticking together through all vicissitudes, and each contributing, according to his ability, to the common pot. To all appearances, Sandro, now nearly forty, had been the steadiest money-getter, and in the needs of this big and growing household, rather than in his own irregularities, we may find the ground of his little worldly success. In any case there is no evidence that he saved anything until his fifty-second year, and then the investment, shared with Simone, was merely a life interest in a small farm. In themselves such details are nugatory. An extraordinary life usually proceeds from such ordinary conditions. But in the straitened home conditions of Sandro Bot-

ticelli, in the severe early studies that won him a paradoxical fame as a realist, in the broad jests with which he sought relief for a growing bitterness against the times, we do find, I think, valuable side-lights upon that hidden artistic life which it is our ambition to revive in outline.

Working with Fra Filippo Lippi, by this time for reasons released from the religious life, the young Sandro really studied Antonio Pollaiuolo. Had not Vasari preserved the tradition, Botticelli's early work would tell us plainly enough that the erratic Frate had been his master. No painter in Florence was better known or more popular than Fra Filippo. Had he not put the neighbors plainly into his pictures—the shy grace of their young mothers, the roguishness of their urchins, the genial poise of their men and matrons? If the innovations of Fra Filippo commended him to such Florentines as Mariano the Tanner, his conservatism was equally popular. Beyond his study of the moods of the human face, which with the crowd always counts for pretty much the whole of art, he took no forward step. Regardless of the new painting in oil mediums, he practised the old beautiful manner of working in tempera. This, with the abundant use of gold, Botticelli

took over from his master, applying the method handed down by the Middle Ages to the new subjects and emotions of the Renaissance. To many it will seem that he put new wine into old bottles by thus persisting in an obsolescent technic. But the charm of his painting is largely in the sense that a new life, wistful and passionate by turns, has swept into an experience where the old lights still burn serenely.

Technically, then, Botticelli owed everything to Fra Filippo. Beyond this, I feel, he owed very little, for the good reason that master and pupil were of diverse temperaments. From the first, in vitality of contour, cunningly devised and controlled motion, concentration of interest, we find Botticelli precociously strong, precisely where his master was weak. Moreover, where these more serious qualities do appear in the Frate, it is in work executed at a time when Sandro was old enough to be an active assistant and counsellor. Take, for example, those remarkable frescoes of 1463–5, the "Funeral of St. Stephen" and "Herod's Feast," painted in the choir of the Collegiata at Prato years after its decoration had been begun. They do not betray the hand of any of Fra Filippo's known assistants, but one at least does inevitably recall the manner of Botticelli. "Her-

od's Feast" shows a fluidity of composition that we find just this once in the work of Fra Filippo. In dancing Herodias, the draperies flutter, obeying the toss of the legs, with unwonted spirit. Herod is the mate of the captains of Holophernes in the little picture painted some years later by Botticelli, and the type is not Filippo's. In many such particulars "Herod's Feast" displays the familiar manner of the Frate with a curious difference—as it were, unstiffened and carried to higher grace and mobility. If we add to the internal evidence of "Herod's Feast" the well-known fact that Fra Filippo, who hated to be hurried, was painting under forfeit on the elaborate composition of the "Funeral of St. Stephen," it will seem but natural that the companion piece should be assigned to a trusted assistant. In candor it should be said that this view is not countenanced by the authorities, and that no strict division of the design or of actual painting between master and pupil is to be thought of.

However that may be, soon after the Prato frescoes we meet Botticelli as a painter in his own right. In the oblong "Adoration of the Magi," of the National Gallery, in the "Judith," the "Slain Holophernes," and the "Fortitude," of the Uffizi—all painted before his twenty-sixth

year—we may trace indubitably the real influence under which he was developing. In these, as indeed in most of the paintings done before his thirty-sixth year, the example of Antonio Pollaiuolo is authoritative. Equally competent as goldsmith, sculptor, draftsman, and painter, Antonio's designs reveal a passion for truth of form and the higher truth of energy. For a kind of dæmonic force, they are still counted among the most remarkable works of all time, displaying through their superficial ugliness a beauty of action, that only an artist can appreciate. In perspective and anatomy he was the most searching spirit of the age. When Botticelli began to paint, Antonio was in his early prime, and his drawings were passed about as unapproachable models. Botticelli, while acknowledging the Frate as master, was really studying with Antonio.

In the oblong "Adoration of the Magi" at London we may see the lesser yielding to the major influence. It is a furniture panel, painted conceivably before Botticelli had left Fra Filippo. This small work boasts two compositions. To the right the Kings from the East and their train, in the familiar oblong arrangement invented by Don Lorenzo Monaco, worship the Child. Here we are very near Fra

Filippo, in the hint of ledgy landscape, in the bits of ruined architecture, in the somewhat detached effect of the figures, more especially in the facial types and draperies. Botticelli's contribution is a greater concentration, and a less formal disposition of the many figures, but this improvement is only half realized. In the main the courtiers are paired off like awkward guests at a dinner-table. To the left of the panel are thrown in, for good measure, the men-at-arms of the Magi in the stir of a brief halt. Here the arrangement is compact, the variety of expression and gesture remarkable. We note the strongly accented, almost distorted masks of Antonio Pollaiuolo, horses in all manner of foreshortening, brusque contrasts of light and shade; in short, all the earmarks of the realistic school. We shall soon find the theme repeated in more effective, because simplified form, in the group of captains and horsemen who loom in the opening of the tent, where lies headless Holophernes.

When Fra Filippo went to Spoleto in 1468, where he died the following year, all business connection between him and his best pupil probably ceased. The affection persisting between them may be judged by the fact that Sandro was to defend the son Filippino in his

hereditary rights, besides undertaking his artistic education. Meanwhile Sandro's devotion to the realistic movement was unswerving, and it is not surprising to find him, as it were, rewarded by a commission from the great Antonio. That painter, in 1470, engaged to paint the seven theological and moral virtues as mural panels for the commercial court held in the Mercanzia. Most of these allegorical figures he turned over, as was his wont, to his brother Piero; one, the "Fortitude," was assigned to Sandro Botticelli. John Ruskin has expressed so much that one would like to feel about the "Fortezza," that I much regret owning how little of it I see. The moody face, which does indeed contrast with the expressionless masks of the six sister virtues, is a reproduction of one of Verrocchio's mannerisms, and (*pace* Ruskin) has nothing to do with nervous courage. One notes a figure most solidly modelled and ornately decked out, which shares the ungainly proportions of the series. In brilliancy of color and fantastic preciousness of ornament we may presume that Botticelli was trying to outdo the Pollaiuoli on their own ground.

The ease with which Botticelli adopted the ornate manner of these goldsmith-painters

raises the question whether he, too, was not trained in metal-work. Vasari declares that he had such training, but this is denied. In any event, whether through his own practice with the tracer or mediately through Antonio Pollaiuolo, Botticelli commands from the first the peculiarly terse and energetic line which is almost a prerogative of the goldsmith-painters of Florence. The feigned sculpture with which he adorned so many of his later works may be a kind of reversion to youthful exercises with the tracer. Much of the architectural screen of the "Calumny," for example, would furnish the most suggestive and appropriate themes for a sculptor-goldsmith.

From such tentative efforts as we have briefly noted, the advance toward independent mastery was swift. For years yet the dynamic forms of Antonio Pollaiuolo are used, but in applications undreamed of by the inventor. In the little panel, "Judith Returning to Bethulia," we detect Antonio's leading in the large figures, completely filling the composition and profiled against a deeply receding champaign with low horizon; but in the swift yet suave motion of the figures, in the calligraphic yet expressive flutter of the draperies, in the keen flash of a yellow robe against the blue, in the

curiously immobile yet sensitive face of Judith, in the dog-like attentiveness of the handmaiden, in a delicacy that pervades this strongly conceived design, we have traits that are Sandro's own. This very famous picture, the subject of many rhapsodies and of innumerable reproductions, has unfairly cast in the shade its less attractive companion piece, "Holophernes Found Dead in His Tent." Nothing could be more tragically inventive, or more truly pictorial, than that astounded group of mail-clad captains and horsemen towering in the opening of a rich pavilion, while the pale light falls pitilessly on the headless body that lies delicately amid the disordered bedclothes, as if merely forespent with wine and lust.

In times of experiment and restless endeavor there come moments when we seem to be projected into the harmony that is our distant, perhaps our wholly unconscious, goal. Such a moment must have smiled upon Botticelli when he painted the so-called "Chigi Madonna," now in the Gardner collection, Boston. As if to forget the ardors of Pollaiuolo, and with them the sweat of the workshop, Sandro adapts a composition of his old master, Fra Filippo, and essays the gently lyrical mood of Verrocchio. An angel, a strange androgynous figure, offers

grapes and ears of wheat to the Christ Child—the symbols of his future passion. The Infant draws back in dubious curiosity. As if to reassure him, the Virgin takes an ear. It is his destiny which she is about to offer. Both figures seem sunk in revery upon a mystery and tragedy sensed rather than perceived. The angel has the grave affability of a visitant in a dream, but shares, too, the inner perturbation of those whom he serves. A bit of placid river landscape completes this most sympathetic composition. There is a complete absence of the conscious effort that marks most of Botticelli's early work. We find anticipated, by more than ten years, the sentiment of those rounds of Madonnas wreathed with angels which constitute the best known, if not the best, achievement of the master. And I am not sure that, for its simplicity and reticence, the youthful picture is not to be preferred.

In 1477, his thirty-third year, Botticelli painted two very famous pictures, the "Adoration of the Magi," in the Uffizi, and the "Allegory of Spring." Their mood is so widely different, their implications as to the temperament of the artist so contradictory, that we must think of them as painted in a time of hesitation. The "Adoration" is the work we

might have predicted, being the mature product of some ten years of realistic studies. He had only to go on to be one of the leaders of the new movement. The "Allegory of Spring" is almost the first hint of that strange beauty in pursuit of which Botticelli was increasingly to avoid the main current in favor of radiant or darkling bywaters. It is the first intimation of the solitary trend of his genius.

The "Adoration of the Kings," let me repeat, sums up the realistic studies of his young manhood in an elaborate composition abounding in incidental portraits, and fairly outdoing Ghirlandaio on his own ground. It was Sandro's most normal triumph, and naturally his most popular picture. For two centuries the diarists and critics united in its praise, and it was still honorably exhibited when the "Allegory of Spring" was deemed fit only for the junk-room. From the time when the "Adoration" was placed in Santa Maria Novella, commissions came readily to the *bottega*, and Sandro's way might have been a smooth one had he chosen to let it be so. In the twenty-three years since I first saw this famous picture I have outgrown, not my admiration, but much of my affection for it. It strikes me as an extraordinary academic exercise, more valuable for the

perfection of the parts than for the charm of the whole. The regal *cortège*, ostensibly on parade below, jars a little with the devotionalism of the Holy Family. Something of this apprehension must have been in Sandro's mind, for when, about five years later, he painted another "Adoration," now in the Hermitage Gallery, he achieved a greater unity of mood and arrangement, wreathing the worshipping courtiers about the Child in converging groups, all most devoutly attentive. And in another repetition of the theme, the ruinously repainted canvas in the Uffizi, he inspired a multitude of figures with a pious vivacity that fairly rivalled, in spirit if not in dignity, Leonardo's unfinished masterpiece. The "Adoration of the Kings" and the "Primavera" were in all probability for some time in the shop together. Possibly visitors, who must have been rather frequent at this period, were as baffled by the "Spring" as the earnest tourist is to-day. But the Florentines, we may guess, at least were not worried by this first appearance of a strange and ambiguous beauty. They seem to have taken it for an odd yet lovely bit of decoration, and the "Allegory" never bit them deeply. It was left for our times to deck out the "Spring" with the legendary embroidery which it certainly invites, yet possibly does not need.

Legend has it that the picture was painted for Lorenzo the Magnificent, that Mercury is the unfortunate Giuliano, and Venus the fair Simonetta. This lady, his lady-love, is said to have sat for many of Botticelli's pictures, and her fragile beauty is said to have haunted Botticelli for many years after her death. Her apparition when Sandro painted her as the sea-born Venus has inspired one of Mr. Maurice Hewlett's most winning pages. All this is delightful matter of poetry, for which the facts give no warrant. The "Spring" contains no portraits, but merely Sandro's characteristic ideal masks. As for Giuliano and Simonetta Vespucci, their relations may have been merely ceremonious. All we know is that Giuliano, wearing her colors—a usual compliment—won the midsummer joust of 1475. As the poets were laboriously filing their eulogies of the champion, she died, affording excellent elegiac material wherewith to eke out chivalric stanzas. The assassination of Giuliano himself, in the flower of his youth, gave pathetic credence to such rhetoric. So far the tradition; now the facts.

The "Spring" was painted, like the "Birth of Venus," and "Pallas and the Centaur," a few years later, for Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco's newly bought villa at Castello. For him Botti-

celli also executed the Dante illustrations, now preserved at Berlin. This relation of patron and artist lasted some twenty years, evoking Sandro's most precious and characteristic work. Compared with this, his relations with the ruling Medici, and especially with Lorenzo the Magnificent, are of an insignificant sort. No commissions, except those for the Sistine Chapel, approach in importance those undertaken for Castello and its master. Mr. Horne has made the case plain for the first time, and it is among the most interesting of his numerous discoveries. Returning to the "Spring," its basis is purely literary and classical. As Doctor Theodor Warburg first showed, Cupid, Venus, Flora, Spring, and Zephyr—in fine, all the right-hand side of the picture—are borrowed from Lucretius. We read in the fifth book of *De Natura Rerum* a splendid passage in which Venus is represented as she who renews all life through recurring springs:

> It ver et Venus et Veneris prænuntius ante
> Pennatus graditur, zephyri vestigia propter
> Flora quibus mater præspargens ante viai
> Cuncta coloribus egregiis et odoribus opplet.

Which Mr. Horne translates: "Spring and Venus go their way, and the winged harbinger

of Venus, Cupid, steps on before; and close upon Zephyr's footsteps, Flora, their mother, strewing all the way before them, covers it with rarest colors and odors." Here we have all the characters except Mercury and the Graces, who are added for good measure, being for that matter frequently named in Latin poetry as part of Venus's train. Here we have, too, the explanation of the pregnancy of Venus, and of Spring, the goddess and minister of all fruitfulness. I cannot forbear to add a few lines from the first book of the *De Natura Rerum*, in which much of the incidental imagery of the picture is suggested—Venus's power over clouds and winds—in the picture delegated to Mercury, and the votive nature of the carpet of flowers and greenery:

> Te, dea, fugiunt venti, te nubila cæli
> Adventum tuum, tibi suavis dædala tellus
> Summittit flores—

The "Spring" of Sandro Botticelli, in short, is only less literary than the "Calumny." Its strange beauty is individual. Neither Lucretius nor a pair of ill-starred young folks explains it. We may regard it as a bit of passionate make-believe, a sheer nympholepsy of Sandro's. He mused until the Tuscan spring

about him dissolved, resolving itself into a distant garden of Venus—an antique paradise, but composed, after all, of the dear, homely Tuscan materials, and peopled by the lithe girls and bonny youths of Florence, raised to a momentary divinity.

We shall return to this fantastically graceful work. It is in all respects quintessential, and to understand it truly would be to read the secret of Botticelli's art. But, for the moment, let us rather consider certain technical points which are not without æsthetic instructiveness. And first, note that the shut-in composition—the orange thicket seems merely a colored and elaborated development of the tooled background of a metal bas-relief—is unusual in Florentine art of the period. Mr. Horne thinks that we may look to a late Gothic arras for this decorative motive. But I feel sure that we need go no further afield than the famous print of the "Ten Nudes" by Antonio Pollaiuolo. There we find the half-conventionalized thicket, and a similar group of agitated forms. In fact, this stern realist curiously pervades the "Spring." The pointed feet with heels raised high, the knotted joints and wiry attachments—all that suggests the actual strain of muscle and sinew, derives from him. From the dancing Salome on

the silver altar-front made by him for St. Mary of the Flower is derived the figure of Flora. Yet how individual remains Botticelli's adaptation of the forms of Pollaiuolo! What had served for rather sterile technical display, or at best for realizing certain effects of ferocity, here becomes the vocabulary of a new and gracious style. It is Florence in her most sensitive genius, seeking a new dialect in which to revive the myths of antiquity. Here is still pure Tuscan idiom, a little raucous, as it should be, but of a pensive and pagan beauty, only essayed before and never afterward repeated. When we reflect that this new loveliness is rooted after all in the asperities of Antonio Pollaiuolo, we are reminded of the Scriptural enigma: "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness."

In passing immediately to the companion piece, the "Birth of Venus," we anticipate by a few years. Adepts of Botticelli may be roughly classified as they prefer one or the other picture, neophytes being as readily stamped by their enthusiasm for the rose-like "Magnificat." Into this amicable strife it would be fruitless to enter. Lovers of the fantastic—I think of the essential—Botticelli will hold by the "Primavera" for the richness of its contents, the raci-

ness of the varied impressions it affords, the general romantic strangeness of the treatment. Those more classically disposed will find a higher satisfaction in the simpler and more unified impression of the "Birth of Venus," in the more advanced and purposeful conventionalization of the landscape, in its sombre harmony of gray, olive, pale blue, and rose, with mellow tracery of gold; in the wistfulness of the virgin goddess unmindful of the cool dawn, of the earnest wind-gods that waft her ashore, of the rose-colored vestment of passion fluttering in the hands of an expectant nymph. Compared with the "Spring," it is less mediæval and hieratic, and perhaps more intimate and appealing. It has the Virgilian sense that recurs in all sensitive modern portraiture of the ancient gods.

Somewhere between the "Spring" and the "Venus"—æsthetically I mean, for it is considerably later than either—belongs "Pallas and the Centaur." It partakes of both the serene and the bizarre beauty and, though summary in execution, has a delicate elaborateness of design inferior to nothing of the master's. The room at Castello that included these three mythologies among its decorations was truly a hall of halls. Would that they might once

Detail from "Birth of Venus," by Botticelli.
In the Uffizi, Florence.

more be united under a Tuscan roof, not in the bleak light of a gallery, but in a kind of reverent seclusion!

The paintings at Castello belonged to one who was both a kinsman and a political opponent of the ruling Medici. It is possible that they were little known. The mention of them by early writers is of the vaguest, as if on hearsay. In any case, despite Vasari's declaration that Sandro painted "plenty of nude women," some of which must have helped feed Savonarola's famous bonfire, we must suppose that his mythologies were little in demand. The "Mars and Venus," of the National Gallery, a furniture panel and of minor importance, though charmingly conceived, completes the list. Numerous school pieces and remoter imitations suggest that others reaped where he had sown.

Lorenzo de' Medici and his circle, the natural patrons for such subjects, gave Botticelli few and trifling commissions. This neglect perhaps drove him back to deeper study of the religious subjects one might suppose he was outgrowing. At all events, we shall find him deliberately retracing his steps, deserting the progressive school, and cultivating a revived and more poignant mediævalism. Of course

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this change did not take place abruptly. It was preceded by a number of experiments, of which the most interesting is the "St. Augustine" at Ognissanti. It was painted in 1480, in competition with Domenico Ghirlandaio's "St. Jerome." Here Botticelli undertakes no less a theme than the portraiture of a soul that through the agony of the mind has obtained an arduous peace. As if the agile formulas of Pollaiuolo were inadequate to express the weight of intellectual melancholy, Sandro reverts to the ponderous, almost metallic, modelling of Andrea del Castagno. Outside the Bargello were Andrea's effigies of early traitors, beside which, in 1478, Botticelli had depicted the Pazzi plotters hanging ignominiously by neck or heel. Of the "St. Augustine," a figure truly of Faust-like significance, Vasari justly remarks that the head "reveals that profound thoughtfulness and acute subtility which is wont to be in persons intellectual and continually abstracted in the investigation of lofty and difficult subjects." And the whole figure, especially the knotted hand pressed to the swelling breast, is quite as expressive as the face. In most of Botticelli's later work we shall find this attempt to realize highly rarefied yet powerful emotions. The recourse to the sculptural methods of Cas-

tagno is merely symptomatic. Botticelli's problem of expressive draftsmanship was to be solved along quite other lines.

The year 1481 was a turning-point in Sandro's career. It was then that his first designs for the *Inferno* of Dante were published, and it was then he went to Rome, where he appears to have had general charge of the preliminary decoration of the Sistine Chapel, with Ghirlandaio as his associate. Probably not one visitor in a hundred to-day notices the twenty-eight figures of popes between the windows, so completely has Michelangelo's ceiling crushed all else; but most of these effigies, which are admirable as decoration, seem to have been designed by Botticelli, and executed by various disciples of Ghirlandaio. Sandro himself painted three frescoes, comprising the "Temptation of Christ," the "Destruction of Korah," and "Moses in Midian," in many incidents. For the first time his peculiar fervor, the rustle of tense emotion that pervades his later pictures, was displayed.

A suitable analysis of these frescoes would be matter for an entire essay. Here I may note only their extraordinary range of sentiment and invention. The stories of Moses in the land of Midian are pure pastoralism,

abounding in graceful forms set in a delectable hill country. In the "Destruction of Korah" we have drama, if not grandiose melodrama—violent gesture, exaggerated expressions, stately Roman monuments in the background. All these elements unite in a kind of ornate impressiveness. Yet the effect is not quite single; some harmonizing ingredient seems lacking. Possibly, when the Sistine Choir intones one of the great vengeful psalms, the fresco actually achieves the operatic effect toward which it seems to be striving. The forms are still those of Antonio Pollaiuolo, but grown less harsh. Abounding in lovely detail, as a whole these compositions convey to me a sense of effort, as if the great task found Sandro unprepared. The fact suggests the limitations of Sandro's gift. He had nothing of the epic sense that goes to make a great mural painter. His art tended almost invariably to complication, and away from simple and broad effects. The kind of cunning sparseness of design that Giotto, and some quite inferior contemporaries of Botticelli, practised habitually was alien to his mood. Where it is found it is usually due to exiguity of space, and one may say paradoxically that nothing of Sandro's is more monumental than three tiny predella panels in the

Florence Academy, unless it be certain of the pen sketches for the "Paradiso."

From Rome Sandro must have brought back something like fame. For a matter of ten years his brush was busy with important commissions. To this time belong the "Coronation of the Virgin," with its lovely wreath of dancing angels; the "Madonna," formerly in Sto. Spirito, and now at Berlin, the most perfectly preserved of his works; the two rounds of the "Virgin with Angels," and the "Annunciation," in the Uffizi; the allegorical frescoes in the Louvre, celebrating the marriage of Lorenzo Tornabuoni to Giovanna degli Albizzi, and finally the "Birth of Venus," and "Pallas and the Centaur," in continuation of the decoration of Castello. In short, these years from his thirty-fifth to his forty-fifth saw the creation of practically all the pictures by which Botticelli is popularly known to-day. At the same time began the circulation of those *bottega* pictures, exaggerating all his mannerisms but lacking his vigor, which have made him seem chiefly a pensive, if not a lackadaisical, temperament. The error is the more pardonable that there was in this time a distinct drift toward a more effusive mood. The landscapes, earlier complicated and smiling, become rigid, conventional,

and sombre, or give place to architectural and sculptural backgrounds. The line serves less to model than to communicate an emotional flutter. Positive contrasts begin to disappear from the color in behalf of a general dusky tonality. His pictures cease to associate themselves with the Pollaiuoli and the realists; it seems as if a more tragic and powerful Lorenzo Monaco had reappeared.

The "Calumny," which Mr. Horne dates in 1494, epitomizes the early and the late Botticelli. It shows all his perfection of line and contour; it outdoes, in the variety and expressiveness of its storied background, even his exuberance of invention; finally it communicates that especial thrill which became his chief aim, to attain which in after years he readily sacrificed all verisimilitude of draftsmanship. One feels this quality in the tilted heads and figures of Ignorance and Suspicion, who fairly encompass the foolish Judge with their draperies; in the rigid accusing hand of Envy, and the sinister fall of the bristling rags he wears—everywhere the most strange and yet appropriate graphic symbols for the passion possessing each figure. Thus Botticelli reconstructed out of the hints of Lucian, the famous masterpiece of Apelles. What in many other

"Madonna and Saints," by Botticelli.
In the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin.

hands became a frigid exercise, in his grew into a spectacle of absorbing interest. And we may suppose that he intended the contrast of a little whirlwind of envy, hatred, and malice contained within a solemn forum, adorned with the figures of saints and heroes, and looking out through stately arches to a quiet sea. Such effects Sandro rarely got so legitimately. In the later pictures the figures begin to lose all stability, becoming so many ciphers for emotion.

Naturally we who know the whole work in its relations see the change more keenly than his contemporaries, but they too seem to have resented the mature Sandro. His vogue waned rapidly. His woebegone saints could hardly hold their own with the complacent, cheerful folk of Ghirlandaio; Piero di Cosimo was soon to compete seriously in both the religious and the fantastic vein. Before 1490 the *bottega* had apparently ceased to produce big altarpieces, and was kept going by furniture panels and small devotional pictures, in which the hand of his assistants is predominant. The master meanwhile was chiefly occupied with the great illustrated Dante which he had undertaken for that model patron, Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco.

To study the Dante illustrations in detail would involve much repetition. They display, in concentrated form, qualities which are constant in Botticelli's work after the first years. The line, whether in the silver-point sketches or the drawings carried forward with the quill, has an extraordinary vivacity and vitality. Many passages show the flame-like ardor of workmanship that we hardly look for outside such draftsmen as Pollaiuolo, Leonardo, and Michelangelo. And this is the more remarkable since the compositions, retaining the freshness of sketches, are in reality most laborious. Each sheet is a true chart of its canto, comprising often many incidents with a fidelity that quite justified Vasari in reckoning Botticelli as a commentator. Nothing could be more sensitive in the way of a pictorial transcript, and perhaps the insubstantiality of the work, considered as illustration, was inevitable. In any case, the illustrations, highly imaginative as they frequently are, of fairly celestial gracefulness in the last cantos of the Purgatorio, are as a whole singularly un-Dantesque. It is as if the sonorous tercets of the *Divine Comedy* were being recited by a thin and almost a foreign, if an exquisite, voice. As in all masterly workmanship, there is an attraction

that lies quite apart from the subject-matter, and in a certain speed and rhythmical progression of line these drawings may be enjoyed beside the finest designs of old China and Japan. What distinguishes them from the greater European examples just cited, is a certain feverishness and disequilibrium which are constant in Sandro's later years.

Following a rather vague implication of Vasari, most critics have regarded the Dante drawings and the adherence to Savonarola's cause as phases of one and the same mood. Sandro, we are told, became a malcontent, not to say a religious fanatic. Mr. Horne has done much to set this matter straight. The excessive preoccupation with the Dante drawings was doubtless due to the relative slackness of other work. Before 1481 Botticelli was already occupied with the *Inferno;* it was natural that the *Divine Comedy* should become his chief personal resource in a middle life becoming ever more introspective. As for Savonarola's ill-omened attempt to found a theocracy in Lorenzo the Magnificent's Florence, much of the illustrated Dante must antedate that agitation. We learn indeed of no active participation by Sandro in the movement until the martyrdom of its leader. His brother Simone,

however, was a bitter Savonarolist, for he was bound over to keep the peace shortly after the Frate's arrest, and had to flee after the *auto da fé*. Thus Botticelli was brought into daily and intense contact with that whole strange politico-religious revival. That he ever took a militant part in it is very doubtful.

After Fra Girolamo's death, he brooded over his work and fate, let the *piagnoni* gather in the shop to bewail the might of anti-Christ, and painted that mystical "Nativity," of the National Gallery, which is a pictorial echo of Savonarola's apocalyptic studies. The date was 1500, "in the troubles of Italy," as the Greek inscription attests. Heaven and earth unite in joy at the mystic birth, only the fiends are discomfited. A pale twilight floods the scene; the line is restless yet restrained and reverent; each human or angelic form, each fold of drapery, is a symbol for ecstasy. No picture in the world gives such an impression of a tenderness, redoubled because alertly self-conscious. All the old Botticelli is in this little canvas.

We hardly need to recall the two stories of Virginia and Lucretia, painted a little earlier: and the four still finer of S. Zenobio's legend, painted a little after 1500. These show the same agita-

tion confined within a beautiful calligraphy, the same muted colors, the same disregard of realistic draftsmanship. The S. Zenobio panels reveal a morbid tension. In the color there is something hieratic. One thinks of the prescribed schemes of Buddhist painting. In sheer emotional content nothing of Sandro's compares with these pictures, except the Munich "Pietà," which Mr. Horne, with others, relegates shortly to the school. But what scholar could create this tremendous composition and then utterly disappear? Surely not Raffaelino del Garbo, who has been suggested. Moreover, the defects of this picture are as characteristic of Botticelli as its merits—the drawing wilfully distorted to become a hieroglyph of anguish, the compositional lines abruptly cut—as it were, extinguished—by the rigid halos, the cavern pressing down upon the group as if forbidding to grief all its physical outlets and alleviations. Whether or not much of the actual paint was applied by a scholar is another affair; it remains, for me, one of the greatest and most authentic creations of the master. Its date should obviously be not much before 1500.

As Sandro's favor dwindled, memory must have supplied him certain consolations. His

pictures, and those of his imitators, had gone far and wide through Italy, engravings had scattered his compositions beyond the Alps. This great diffusion of Botticelli's manner has somewhat obscured his very personal contribution to the art of the Renaissance. Opinions about him differ widely. One need not be surprised at finding a Ruskin emphasizing Sandro's religious sincerity, while Mr. Maurice Hewlett amends by insisting that to get at the soul of the fact before him was Botticelli's ideal. Both these judgments come to saying that he is a consummate illustrator, a view which seems to us misleading. Everywhere he adds to narration an abstract beauty of handling, which is really the important thing. One cannot say that his manner grows humbly out of his matter, as it does with great illustrators—Dürer, for example. Nor shall we learn his secret from the critic of yesterday who finds him an amateur of the pathos of phthisical decline, nor yet from Walter Pater's famous description of the "Virgin Mother" moodily resentful of her arduous election. Such appreciations generally are rooted, not in the study of the master himself, but in vague revery upon the product of the school.

Against all sentimental and pseudoscientific

interpretations, Mr. Horne sets his face firmly. Like Mr. Berenson, with whom he agrees in the main, he believes the problem of Botticelli to be really a technical one. Mr. Berenson has ascribed the charm of this master to his peculiar use of the line. It serves, he says, not merely to bound or indicate form, but rather to symbolize significant motion.

Mr. Horne qualifies this opinion: "Botticelli has been called 'a supreme master of the single line'; but a subtler criticism would, I think, prefer to say that, among the moderns, he is an unique master of contour—that he invariably uses his line to express a definite contour, not only in the outline of the figure, but of some feature, hand, or fold within its mass, and always with a rhythm and beauty of intention which is unparalleled in Florentine art."

In citing "rhythm," Mr. Horne concedes half the case to those who emphasize the vivacity of Botticelli's line as against its plastic suggestiveness. Mr. Horne quotes felicitously the younger Pliny's praise of an outline "that may give assurance of other parts behind itself, and even suggest those which it hides." This view represents Mr. Horne's aversion from sentimental criticism, his insistence in Botti-

celli's affinity with Giotto, his belief that a virile manner is the fundamentally characteristic quality. Another fine critic, Mr. William Rankin, stresses rather the affinity with the dynamic vehemence of Cimabue, and it seems to me more rightly. Motion seems to me, after all, the main impression one gets from Botticelli's finest pictures, as the "Spring," the "Birth of Venus," the Tornabuoni frescoes, the "Calumny," indeed from the seemingly static altar-pieces of the middle and later years—a motion cunningly reinforced by a symmetry of the color masses, and by consummate skill in arranging and rendering diaphanous draperies. In fact, what seems to distinguish him from men like Antonio Pollaiuolo, who share his linear quality, is not merely a profound difference of sentiment, but a far finer use of the brush in masses—something quite other than its expressive employment in line. Take the "Spring," that quintessential masterpiece: there is indeed an amazing arrangement of line, billowing into the frame, with Zephyr and Ver, rippling through the limbs and drapery of Flora, arrested but not stopped in the large ease of gravid Venus, shimmering rapidly once more in the swaying forms of the Graces, and taken up finally in the firmly poised contours

of Mercury. All this may be said to be a linear quality; but how this movement is reinforced by such contrasts as the shivering drapery of Flora, the heavy folds of Venus's robes, the twinkling fall of the Coan veils caught against the dancing forms of the Graces! To find a passage like this last, one must go to the religious painters of China or old Japan—to those seers to whom cloud wrack and swirling water had yielded up their secrets.

When one studies the quality of these vestments of the Graces, as compared with the linear framework of this great and lovely picture, one seems to glimpse a cascade in a mountainous vale. The form of that gossamer thing is determined by the geology of the whole complex of ravines. It echoes and must echo the gaunt folds of the mountain, merely converting their austerity into its own fluid formulas. Study any of Botticelli's mature works, particularly the Vatican frescoes, and you will not fail to note a magic of the brush that powerfully enhances the value both of the expressive contour and of the dynamic line.

A few years before his death, Sandro Botticelli was visited by Francesco Malatesta, confidential agent of Isabella, Marchioness of Mantua. She was anxious to find artists to complete

the decoration of that famous little room which Mantegna had begun so splendidly. Malatesta made a round in Florence, and found Perugino both too busy and too indolent, and Filippino Lippi, whose fame had overtaken that of his master, much preoccupied. Botticelli, who had been much praised as "an excellent painter, and one who serves willingly," was less deeply involved than the others, and would gladly undertake the work. In spite of this recommendation, Isabella, whose preferences were all for notorieties or mediocrities who followed her "poesies" obediently, would have none of Sandro. Had she taken her agent's hint, we might have found the old Botticelli renewing in the Palace at Mantua his early triumphs at Castello. A late Botticelli painted upon a poesy of Isabella d'Este —the fancy likes to play with such a theme. We do better perhaps to note how typical of those later years was this frustrated hope.

Botticelli, who, with the Roman commission of 1481, seemed to be on the way to Italian fame, had become the taste of a few Florentines. That he worked at Volterra we know, and there is record also of an unsuccessful competition at Pisa. But in the main his story is purely Florentine. I can hardly think

of a contemporary of similar repute who was so little besought from outside. He had deliberately withdrawn himself from the popular current, he had invented a baffling and disquieting sort of beauty, all his own, and he paid the penalty in the neglect of those who like their beauty new and fashionable.

When, in the middle of May, 1510, his body was taken round the corner from the house he had occupied from childhood, and laid in the cloister of Ognissanti, Fra Bartolommeo was the acknowledged master of the new manner, Andrea del Sarto was just rising into popularity, and the portentous young Raphael, grown too great for Florence, had already gone on to Rome. A discontented old figure that used to hobble along the sunny side of the Arno on two sticks, disappeared, a shop that had been a centre of mild sedition was closed. That is probably about all that the average Florentine made of the death of Sandro Botticelli.

It is easy to berate a city that had small zeal for lost causes, yet it may be doubted if our enthusiasm for Botticelli is much more intelligent than was the neglect of his immediate followers. We constantly speak and write of his genius, so personal in its quality, so detached from the normality of the greatest

painting, in terms that befit a Giotto, a Masaccio, or a Titian.

Artists may roughly be divided into two classes, as their faith in natural appearances is large or small. The first class is in a constant expectancy of finding the needful beautiful forms in nature, as in a kind of great reservoir. One thinks of Rodin letting his models rove freely about the studio until the expected accident reveals the expressive pose. In art of this sort the strangeness of individual fancy is constantly tempered—as it were, normalized—by reference to daily experience, receiving a kind of objective confirmation. The greatest genius will, I think, always show this hopefulness. It is perhaps the supreme value of Greek art to have proved how the vision of the artist and that of the common man need vary but by hair's breadths, and yet give sufficient play to genius. So convinced were the ancients of this community of vision that their critics regarded the artist as merely a capable imitator of what all men saw. Such a view does scant justice to the creative nature of Genius. It does express the large element of golden mediocrity in the greatest art, whether it be Greek sculpture or the painting of Titian, Raphael, and Rubens. The heirs

royal of art are at home in their world. But we find also a type of artists whose attitude toward the phenomenal world is one of distrust. It does not afford them precisely, or even approximately, the materials of expression which they crave. They glimpse a remote beauty, a sort of Platonic model, which is never realized in daily experience, indeed seems rather blunted or destroyed in the forms that strike the eye. These lovers of a recondite beauty must set themselves to inventing a world—a whole repertory of visible forms, which may have little relation to those constituting the world of the average man. In fact, as the mystagogue withdraws more privately within the sanctuary of his own emotions and surmises, his concern for the witness of the outer eye necessarily diminishes. His world becomes difficult to verify, and explicable only as the emotions it shadows forth are shared by the beholder.

Thus we find a Botticelli and a Turner quitting the sober studies of their youth, giving rein to dreams and framing a world as poignant or as gorgeous as it is insubstantial, being in fact a bold symbol and not a transcript of any reality seen by other eyes. Of such devotees of occult beauty, we may only say that their quest always grazes the abnormal. The great-

est geniuses manage to find their symbols near the average experience.

But we do well not to urge such differences, rather to take the pilgrim geniuses for what they are. It is no more profitable to inquire whether Botticelli is greater than, say, Masaccio or Giorgione, than it is to hold Poe and Byron in the same critical balance. The question to ask of these luminaries of the cavern is: Do they create their world and is it a delightful one to visit? The further question, Could one live in it? may graciously be asked only of those greater geniuses who dare be ordinary. No, I do not think anybody, unless it were a very young person for a very short time, could live in Botticelli's world, and yet to visit it from time to time is one of the highest pleasures. It is pervaded by a wistful twilight, in which muse the frail figures of the gods recalled to a world that knows them not. Saints released for a moment from the stress of their divine meditations stand like soldiers at ease. Before winding rivers or the faint blue of morning skies the Madonna, attended by solicitous angels, sits gravely. An apprehension of the future of her Son has shorn motherhood of its joy. Then there are glimpses of her glorified, the great price having been paid, and there lithe angel forms dance and

pelt each other with roses in a measured ecstasy. With the angels we are always nearest the artist. They dance above the penthouse, beneath which kicks the Baby Christ, moving with a solemn joy. Or on earth they welcome the souls of pilgrims, martyrs perhaps, with ineffable tenderness. Then there are sterner and stranger ranges in this twilight world. A ghostly lover mail-clad harries the soul of a merciless, fair dame with horse and hounds. Korah's impious body-guard stagger in terror as the ground quakes and hell opens beneath their feet. In the dark mouth of a low cavern an anguished group press close together to grasp the fainting Mother of Sorrows, and the slender, godlike form rigidly bent back which threatens to slip from her unconscious arms. Such are some of the people that inhabit this gray world. All have great cares and concerns, their bodies, limbs, and draperies sway obedient to some master emotion as flame fanned by a wind. Among them all there is none who smiles, except Flora, and she with the malice of one who offers, as sufficient homage to Venus,

"The frail duration of a flower."

Florence gave scant hints for the creation of such a world. It was as sheer an invention in

fifteenth-century Tuscany as the landscape of the Faery Queene in sixteenth-century Ireland.

Botticelli's realm, however, is familiar enough to all persons in all lands who seek a direct expression of highly intellectualized emotion with a minimum of means. All artists who regard the visible world as consisting mostly of superfluities are akin to him. Thus his real artistic affinities, particularly in his mature phase, are not among the painters of Italy, but among those Buddhist painters who invented concise, abstract symbols for all stages of spiritual self-perfection; or, better, among those Japanese interpreters of sea and sky who dissected the appearance down to its ultimate pattern.

Such artists do nothing to endear our everyday world to us; they lend no glory to common wholesome things. But they enlarge our perceptions, refine our emotions, and increase our imaginative expectancy. If they do little to make our universe seem splendid, and in fact reck too little themselves of its freely offered splendors, they make it more mysterious, more varied, and more inexhaustible. They do good service, somewhat at the sacrifice of wide and durable fame, in kindling the naturally stolid texture of the human spirit.

III

EL GRECO

EL GRECO

After nearly three centuries of neglect, varied only by dispraise, the Cretan wanderer Domenico Theotocopuli has been reborn into fame. Artists particularly make a cult of him. Museums pay the prices of a Velasquez for his pictures, which only a generation ago passed for the product of a diseased mind. Criticism deals with him in the most serious way. We have the remarkable biography of Señor Cossio, the sensitive appreciation of MM. Barrès and Lafond, and as well a convenient monograph by Messrs. Calvert and Hartley.

Note, however, that painters first made the fame of this great visionary. Unlike other revivals, the Greco cult has not been preached *in partibus* by the middlemen of art; it has grown among the studios of Paris and London, whence it has spread widely. Now, all popularity implies a preparedness in the public, but equally it implies a propagandist or a group of champions. We talk as if the vogue of painter, novelist, or playwright simply grew. Instead,

it is made, perhaps, by a single seasonable word of one influential person. Mr. X, the present incumbent of the literary pontificate, tells Mesdames Y and Z over the ortolans that A's first novel reveals genius. The fundamental fact of a popularity is always the same. Somebody feels an enthusiasm and tells somebody else. I often think how much more vivid would be the annals of art if we but knew the real fathers of the great enthusiasms. There was, perhaps still lives, an obscure individual who casually told Ruskin about Tintoretto. Somebody undoubtedly first mentioned Greco admiringly, and in recent years. I merely suggest that the studios began to hum with this new sensation about a dozen years ago when John Sargent, then planning the Christian subjects in the Boston Public Library, had returned from a prolonged visit to Spain.

But whether it was Mr. Sargent or another who first gave the impulse, somebody would have done it. We were ready for Greco. The rationalizing methods in art and letters seemed to have played out. Men had discovered that there was no salvation in the spots of Manet, nor yet in the dots of Monet. The older realism of Courbet had run its course, with the Rougon-Macquart of Zola. After Taine and

his methodology, the impressionism of Jules Lemaître and Anatole France was giving the tone to criticism. In painting temperament was coming to be the most treasured quality. Too much of it there could not be. One yielded to the hieratic lusciousness of Gustave Moreau. The morbid precocities of Aubrey Beardsley were winning international repute. The wisest of dreamers, Puvis, was still active. Burne-Jones's fairy-land had not reached its ultimate contour. In letters, new intimations were coming from D'Annunzio, and from Hauptmann. Huysmans had invented a new and poignant form of confessional. Mallarmé was just gone and unforgotten, so Verlaine. Truly, the demand for temperament had produced that commodity in abundance. Resurgent romanticism—a more feverish and disillusioned type than the old—required its own. And no painter of the past was more emphatically its own than the sombre Cretan who filled Toledo with visions of nightmare and ecstasy during the years when Cervantes was writing *Don Quixote*.

The record of Greco's life is scanty, yet on the whole illuminating. We meet him first in a letter of the Croatian miniaturist, Giulio Clovio. Writing in the late autumn of 1570,

he begs Cardinal Farnese to give temporary lodging at Rome to an able young Candiot painter, a pupil of Titian. The cardinal presumably accorded a more substantial patronage, for several of the earlier pictures are traceable to the Farnese collection. What chance called Domenico to Toledo and the service of his Most Catholic Majesty we do not know. By 1577, however, the stranger had completed an important picture, "The Assumption," now wandered to Chicago, for the Church of Santo Domingo el Antiguo. Two years later he had completed for the cathedral the famous masterpiece entitled "The Stripping of Christ" ("El Expolio"), and was engaged in a litigation over the pay. During the trial he declined to tell why he had come to Spain and, though he must have been at least four years already in Toledo, declared that he did not understand Spanish and requested the services of an interpreter. The incident tells that his life had been a solitary one. In 1580 he received from Philip II a commission to paint for the chapel of the Escurial a "Martyrdom of St. Maurice." This picture, the first that reveals the true Greco, was the subject of various disputes, and finally gave so little satisfaction that it was denied its position in the chapel and rele-

gated to the chapter hall. "It satisfies few," writes Father Sigüenza in 1605, adding cautiously, "though they say it has great art, and that its author has much knowledge, and that excellent things can be seen from his hand." Written only nine years before Greco's death, and at the height of his fame, this comment suggests that plain people found his repute mysterious.

His own Toledo at least supported him loyally. The Toledo where Jew and heretic still roasted at the stake to the edification of Christian eyes and noses knew how to appreciate the flame-like ecstasy of his brush. For nearly forty years he labored there. Not merely painting, but sculpture and the designing of architectural altar-backs, enlisted his energies. Pacheco visited the old man in 1611 and reports him as of philosophical bent, a writer on art, an inventor of witty sayings. He adds the really important information that he saw clay models for every picture Greco had painted. This shows that the distorted and exaggerated anatomy of Greco's figures was not due to careless improvisation, but was based on deliberate choice.[1] He pro-

[1] Greco may have borrowed this practice from Tintoretto, who set up his compositions in wax models.

duced these formless, inarticulate saints quite as cool-headedly as Leighton ever did a classical composition or our own Brush a family group, steadying his brush like these later men by preliminary exercise with the clay. A generation after Greco's death Giuseppe Martinez gathered up some enlightening residual gossip. Of the pictures he could say little good. They were extravagant beyond belief. The painter's nature was as extravagant as his painting. Of the value of his works he held a vainglorious opinion. Declaring them beyond price, he pledged instead of selling them, and his patrons gladly advanced substantial sums on this security. "He earned many ducats, but spent them in too great pomp and display in his house, to the extent of keeping paid musicians to entertain him at mealtimes." For the rest, we learn that "he left no wealth but two hundred unfinished paintings, that he was a famous architect, and very eloquent in his speeches." Beyond these hints we know little. There was a wife somewhere in the background, and a son, Jorge Manuel, who lived to continue indifferently the tragic manner of his sire. To the end of his life Greco signed his pictures in fine Greek characters, *Dominikos Theotocópoulos*. In 1614 he died,

intestate, comforted by the sacraments, and was buried in Santo Domingo el Antiguo, where time has effaced his epitaph.

From various scattered intimations, it seems to me, we divine a personality. The contours perhaps are vague, as they are in Greco's own creations, but, as in these, the emotional bias is unmistakable. An inordinate professional pride, a litigious bent, a dread of society, with a craving for luxury and suave sensations, a brooding philosophical disposition commanding eloquent words—here are the familiar traits of the superman. The profound melancholy that accompanied these capacities is written a hundred times with singularly unvarying lineaments in those portraits in which through the features of his patrons he celebrated the dignity of his own spleen. Pride, sensitiveness, inwardness—this equipment made him an ideal interpreter of the Spain of Philip II. They thought Greco mad, and perhaps they were partly right. No perfectly normal person could have lived himself so unreservedly into the religious ardors and ecstasies of the Spain of Teresa of Avila.

But the story of the man is better surmised from his works than from documents and note-

books. Born in Candia, his first impressions of painting, and perhaps his first practice of the art, must have been limited by the Byzantine decadence. Yet there were strange stirrings within the body of that death. The Greek painters who lived along the Venetian trade routes had in excellent prints the compositions of Tintoretto and Michelangelo. Within the hieratic limitations of gold background, prescribed color, and calligraphic modelling and drapery, some of them tried to emulate the grand style that they glimpsed from afar. No great pictures came of the endeavor. But I know few works more strangely piquant than certain of the sixteenth-century panels in which insular artists undertook to write back Michelangelo into the immemorial formulas of Byzantium. This was the art that first influenced Domenico, and, curiously enough, his own fully developed formula in Spain, with its contempt for reality and strong decorative intention, resembles more strikingly this perturbed form of Byzantinism than it does the Venetian painting in which he was actually schooled.

To have been a painter of repute in 1570, as Giulio Clovio assures us Greco was, implies several years of tutelage. Tintoretto, we are told,

was the real model for the young painter, even if Titian was the titular master. This may be—the early Grecos have been easily confused with both Tintoretto and Bassano—but I fear the disclaimer rests upon the inveterate tendency to regard Titian chiefly as the author of "Sacred and Profane Love," the "Man with the Glove," the "Flora," the "Assumption," and the Pesaro Madonna. Nothing is stranger than the conspiracy of criticism to pass lightly over Titian's mature and most characteristic work. As a matter of fact, by 1565, when, roughly speaking, we may suppose Greco came to Venice, Titian was passing into his ultimate tragic phase. The old patient, beautiful methods of building up a picture in successive overpaintings and glazings, he had largely disused in favor of more direct, drastic, and expressive methods. The old full harmonies of crimson, blue, green, and umber, had given way to a general sombre tonality, varied by rich color, sparsely applied, and by flashes of cold light athwart the darkness. When we think of the Titian that aided Greco, we must summon up, not the creator of the Giorgionesque poesies, but the painter of the "St. Jerome" of the Brera, the "Flagellation" of the Louvre, the equestrian "Charles V" of the Prado. Tech-

nically, and spiritually, the affinity between master and pupil is so close at this time that we need not emphasize extraneous influences.

What Greco did in the Venetian manner requires, however, but passing attention. His earliest work may be a "Last Supper," owned by Mr. Charles Loeser, Florence. A similar replica is at Philadelphia in the Johnson collection. Here we find the careful, rather inexpressive work of a beginner. In "Christ Healing the Paralytic," in the "Scourging of the Money Changers from the Temple," pictures which exist in many versions, and in the "Adoration of the Kings" at Vienna, the real man begins to appear. If, on first glance, these canvases associate themselves with Titian, Tintoretto, and Bassano, a closer inspection reveals a more exaggerated elongation of the figures, notably small heads, a characteristic wildness in expression, a studied contortion of pose, with keener passages of crimson and green, than the current Venetian practice tolerated. These traits are not insistent or sensational. Without the Toledo pictures, the slight peculiarities of these early works would probably escape us. We have lost Greco's own portrait, which, Clovio assures us, excited the admiration of artistic Rome, but Naples still keeps the fine likeness

of Clovio himself, a sound product of the Venetian school, and the odd allegory "Man Is Fire, Woman Tow." The point to note in this not very admirable student work is that Greco had mastered the technic of Venice, and could readily have made of himself a second-rate Venetian master. Such perhaps might have been his lot, had not some chance unknown to us taken him to Spain, withdrawn him from the criticism of his peers and even from the sight of fine Italian painting.

In swarming, gray Toledo, set high within its river loop, still ruled by the savage, gloomy, or ecstatic passions of the Middle Ages, there had been no revival of learning, no liberation of the human spirit; the tolerant Moors themselves had in the main merely provided material for religious fanaticism to work upon. Life was passed in the expectation of the miraculous. Hardly beyond the memory of the grandparents of very old people, St. Stephen and St. Augustine had come down from heaven to lay the pious count, Don Gonzalo Ruiz of Orgaz in his tomb in Santo Tomé. The sense of sin was oppressively strong. But for the blood of Christ and the martyrs guaranteeing the future, life would be one long intolerable

terror. Here was a world of mysticism that still lacked its painter, and then came the Greek to appall and ravish the eye.

Yet even in remote Toledo, Venice was not easily to be renounced. Greco's first Spanish picture, the "Assumption of the Virgin," is obviously based on Titian's masterpiece. Its rhetorical quality is the same. What is new and original is the drastic half-realistic treatment of the heads of the apostles and those adult angels transcribed from magnificent Castilian women with whom, in rather Oriental fashion, Greco continued to people his heavens. They are in some fashion his most original and gracious contribution to art. Their lithe and powerful figures never suffer the distortions that his saints undergo. They are the elder sisters of Velasquez's "Venus." In many pictures they are the single element of materiality. The man who created them was undoubtedly a mystic, but at the bottom of his heart he assuredly was no ascetic. Indeed, one may say of the asceticism of Spain itself that it was like an anchorite who had by strange chance or instinctive design chosen his cave on the haunted steeps of Venusberg. The more famous "Stripping of Christ," which is still in the Cathedral of Toledo, is again highly Venetian

in its elements. All the forms, I think, even the overpraised three Marys, could be paralleled in the school of Titian. Remarkable in this picture is its visionary detachment. No locality is indicated or needed. A menacing throng presses out of the gloom about the patient figure of Christ. This restless mass is balanced by the quiet group of the Marys and the workman who bends statuesquely as he bores a hole in the cross. Threatening hands surge out into the torchlight; the bodies to which they belong shimmer uncertainly in the shadow. The scene is a densely peopled no man's land, where light and darkness contend. It is inhabited not by palpable forms, but by passions. This renunciation of realistic setting is crucial for Greco. In his early pictures we find substantial architecture, and landscape; now simply portentous folk plucked from surrounding darkness by shafts of spectral light.

This formula brings Greco into strange associations. Spiritually, it allies him with Rembrandt, whose figures tend to become an incandescence within a luminous darkness. But here the chiaroscuro, while a potent means of expression, remains as well a sound and effective means of representation. Rembrandt's mystery is in essence a sublimated reality. In

Greco, on the contrary, representation is soon left far behind. The chiaroscuro becomes a dissolvent, the figures flutter in the light like vapors, the limbs swell or bend as if composed of half-fused metal, the hands—frequently foreshortened—flicker like fronds blown in the wind. In the "St. Maurice" of the Escurial and the "Entombment of the Count of Orgaz" we have merely the first symptoms of such deliquescence. In the "Adoration of the Shepherds" of the Metropolitan Museum the process is complete. The triumph of this method we find in the "Baptism" and "Resurrection" of the Prado, or, better yet, in the "Vision of St. John" in the Zuloaga collection.

Take the most accessible, if by no means the best, picture of this type, the "Adoration." The wilful distortion of the figures, the reduction of the human form to so many shreds whipped by the wind, obeys, after all, an emotional law. The picture quivers with the ecstasy of worship. The wonder represented by a tiny Babe irradiating light has shaken the inner being of the Mother and the Shepherds. The painter has ventured to communicate this tremor in subtle arrangements of interpenetrating light and darkness and in calculated distortions of the figures. What the picture

"Entombment of the Count of Orgaz," by El Greco.
In the Church of St. Thomas, Toledo.

lacks, partly through repainting and fading, is the usual rich passages of foreground color and the full glamour of Greco's ashen brilliancy.

In the "Vision at Patmos" (often misnamed "Sacred and Profane Love") we find him most himself. The praying figure of the Beloved Disciple fills and crowds the left-hand side of the picture. The body is grotesquely elongated, the arms strained upward; the whole forms a sort of foreground caryatid for the frame. Above, opposite the rapt face, pale lights break through the gloom in blotches. In the background under the giant arm of the Seer, hover lightly the nude and flame-like forms of men and women. To the right infant angels rush down bearing the resurrection robes to a long figure poised like an Apollo, a strange pendant to the almost formless St. John. It is easy to say that the elongation of all the figures is extreme, that St. John, should he rise from his knees, would be at least fifteen heads high; but all these things are comparatively irrelevant to us, as they were to Greco himself. Imagine St. John reduced to approved proportions and set properly within the composition. Three-quarters of the effect of the picture would be gone immediately. That bleakly illuminated, half-

human form, swaying up and across the scene like a tempest-tossed oak, is the true—nay, the only—symbol for the apocalyptic mood as Greco felt it. And, indeed, is not this savage formula—the flesh itself being remoulded by the blissful agony of revelation—far truer to the spirit of the book itself than the placid cartography of the Torcello mosaic workers or the inspired dramatizations of Dürer? In the expression of religious mysticism, or, more accurately, of the gloomy fanaticism that the religious spirit assumed in Spain during the Catholic reaction, Greco has few rivals and no equal.

It was the element of excess in the man that made him famous. If he thought his pictures beyond price, it was because no others proclaimed so emphatically the tragic contest of heaven for the possession of the human soul, and is it not this quality in his painting that commends it to the modern artist? The lambent movement of his compositions is an innovation and a piquant one. His world is interfused with a light all its own. At bottom, what most of the great technicians have created is a fashion of lighting. The sulphurous reek of Tintoretto, the serene blue of Veronese, the amber obscurity of Rembrandt, the flushed

mother-of-pearl of Tiepolo, the steely irradiation of Velasquez—these are what painters chiefly prize. The effects of an artist are determined by his conception of light. His act of creation is merely a *fiat lux*—he illumines a thing seen with the inner eye. The worst thing we can say of him is that his eye is darkness, creates no light of its own, cravenly accepts an alien or prescribed luminosity. No such reproach lies against Greco. He fills his canvases with a peculiar ashen radiance—Mr. Charles S. Ricketts, in his book on the Prado, has noted justly its charnel suggestion—that plays upon the underlying blackness in the most diverse fashion. The modulation of this pallor is Greco's secret. It bursts violently above his figures like a moon searching the rifts in a cloud; it falls in palpable rays as from a reflector; it flickers through the dark corners of the picture, moves tenderly upon upturned faces, settles steadily upon outstretched and almost translucent fingers, is drunk up by masses of moss-green or glowing crimson stuff. Something theatrical there is in this, and something immensely able. Because Greco wrought so craftily with light itself as if there were no intervening pigment, because he contrived such various effects out of a single formula—a

mass of rich color set below a subtile weaving of shadow with pallid light—because of these purely technical qualities Greco passes for a great artist in an age when light is king.

We have seen why the modern artist usually admires Greco, and, if the above analysis of his religious painting be correct, why, the man of taste cannot afford to dismiss him merely as a bad draftsman. Greco knew what he was about. The element of excess and self-hypnosis was deliberately cultivated. We cannot well like him in spite of it. It is of the essence of his art. We may then at least test ourselves by asking which pictures we like best, those in which the emotion has assumed strange yet not abnormal forms, or those in which the dissolvent process is complete—concretely, do you care most for the "Burial of the Count of Orgaz" and the "Martyrdom of St. Maurice," or for the "Vision of St. John" and the various Baptisms? And this is a very personal question, for it comes to saying: "Do you like him most when most himself, or when his passionate spirit is tempered by reflection on his theme and respect for the traditions of his craft?" In simple frankness I am bound to say that I remember best and could least spare the "Burial of the Count of Orgaz." That great

and unforgetable picture seems to me to contain at their height all of Greco's most valuable qualities.

St. Stephen and St. Augustine in magnificent vestments have come down from heaven to lay the body of good Don Gonzalo in its grave. It is the moment after their intervention. The celestial officiants bend tenderly over the mailed body, which lies, not stiff, like a corpse, but flexed in their arms, with the head falling sideways like that of one in a swoon. At the left one Capuchin friar points out the miracle to another. At the right a deacon gazes into the heavenly radiance above, while an unseeing priest continues to read the service for the dead. The gold embroideries of the saints and the priest—especially a superb moss-green mantle—afford a sonorous contrast with the bluish reflections of the armor and the silvery sheen of the deacon's gauzy surplice. Between these flanking foreground figures stretches a row of solemn heads above white ruffs and black doublets—the mourners. Some gaze ecstatically into the opened heaven, their large eyeballs rolled high into cavernous sockets. Others, with a gentler sentiment, keep their eyes fixed on the dead man; a few maintain the impassive attitude of firm men yielding neither to grief nor surprise. The only

overt indication of either emotion is three of those diaphanous hands waving flower-like before the steady mass of black breasts and shoulders. I can conceive nothing more poignantly self-contained, nothing more magnificently correct, nothing more completely Spanish. Above this file of mourners, and seemingly poised on the flames of torches right and left in the background, is heaven itself occupying the semicircular top of the great canvas. There are permitted the gestures forbidden to knightly folk here below. Balanced on clouds, Christ reaches down in benediction to the Virgin and the gaunt soul of the Count. Three strong-winged, cloud-compelling angels attend the group. Through rifts are seen the congregations of the saved, ranged in their hieratic circles. The clouds are effulgent with the half-seen faces of the cherubim. All heads strain forward in adoration, the whole mass surges with light and motion. Certain overfine visitors wish the celestial part away as conventional. To me the contrast of the unmeasured joy and worship above, with the ceremonious, well-contained affliction below, is one of the most appealing and pathetic things in art. I can hardly imagine anything more truly felt or more superbly visualized.

Those persons who expect from art the stab that life itself deals in spiritual emergencies, will prefer Greco in his most undisciplined mood. I have no such expectation or desire. For me the sense of beauty admits all manner of excitement, but always an excitement contained within an enfolding serenity. Within limits many degrees of keen emotional experience are possible. But the moment the sheer excitement perturbs the serenity the impression of art is tottering; the moment it prevails the sensation is no longer of art at all. Contrariwise, when the excitement departs, the serenity becomes void of content—a complacency splendidly null. If this be true, the sense of beauty is akin to the feelings that we have at moments of greatest physical and mental efficiency. The orator riding the storm against hostile hearers knows the calm of throbbing nerves, and that, I take it, is the serenity of art. Thus every impression of art must end well in the sense of leaving us calmed and fortified—the meaning, I take it, of the much-discussed term of Aristotle, *katharsis*.

If we measure Greco by this standard, we shall find him, save in a very few pictures, wanting. Through him we rarely win to seren-

ity of any sort. He dismisses us amazed and troubled. He is called a great portrait-painter. There could, I think, be no greater error, and yet few artists have painted more moving and impressive portraits. But these scores of likenesses come down to a single character. Always the haggard face, narrow forehead, uneasily rolling eye under sockets sharply arched —always an overt melancholy silently appealing for sympathy. The technical ability in many of these stern effigies is prodigious. Besides, these faces haunt one. Yet we remember merely a kind of composite of them all. A single ghost would fairly represent the portraiture of Greco, while the persons that one recalls casually from, say, Titian, Holbein, Velasquez, Bronzino, constitute a varied world. In exacting the last jot of wonder, Greco was something more or less than Spanish. It has frequently been said that he is more Spanish than the Spaniards, and in the sense of rejecting the reserve that veils their ardent emotional life this is justly observed. No one has expressed the ferocious ecstasy of Loyola's Spain so completely. But no Spaniard, I take it, would regard so reckless an exposure as quite dignified. Zurbaran remains, after all, the finest and truest representa-

tive of the Spanish soul in post-Reformation travail.

I have suggested that there may have been in Greco some deliberate cultivation of the ecstatic mood, some rather conscious resort to self-hypnosis. The fact that in his old age he returned to his quieter and more concrete manner—in the lovely "St. Martin" of San José and the "Assumption" of San Vicente, for example—suggests that his wilder manner may have been not quite spontaneous. At any rate, he was not its victim. When it pleased him that his pictures should no longer recall the melting-pot they readily regained substance and stability. There probably was about him some such element of mystification as we find in a Salvator Rosa or a Whistler. We must take such people only a trifle more seriously than they take themselves. From a sardonic or a wilfully vehement person the finest art cannot come.

We must not expect it in Greco. But the art that misses equilibrium is by no means valueless. If we enhance ourselves most vitally through the art that has achieved a passionate serenity, we at least enrich our experience through the art which has missed its bounds. The cry of overstrung nerves and un-

satisfied temperament is not uttered in vain when the sufferer is large enough to find in himself the aspiration or the agony of many men. Certain pedants have written as if the world would be better without its disorderly geniuses. There could, I think, be no sorer error. We need the unbalanced talents, the *poètes maudits* of every craft. They strew the passions that enrich a lordlier art than their own. They fight valiantly, a little at the expense of their fame, against the only unpardonable sins, stupidity and indifference. Greco should always be an honored name in this ill-destined company. Nay, at times, he escapes them, and hovers uncertainly near the elect body of the greatest artists.

IV

GOYA AND HIS ART

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For violent spirits the painter is Goya, and also for wavering souls who seek consolation in the violence of others. Where other artists profess to be, he really is, sinister. In his most characteristic inventions it seems as if he deliberately preferred a contemptible subject-matter, the better to wreak his scorn. The horror with which he deals so vividly is never external. He must actually have seen the sordid and fearful visions of the "Caprichos" and the "Desastres de la Guerra." There is in the British Museum an early drawing which shows a young man, probably Goya himself, dazed and fascinated by obscene faces which come and go. It is a record of dreadful hallucinations gladly accepted. Such visions entirely accord with those mysterious illnesses and depressions which periodically beset the man. He craved the frightful. When in prosperous retirement he set up his own house near Madrid, he decorated it with nightmares—discarnate witches riding through the foul air, a demented Saturn gnawing at the mutilated

body of his own child. Aside from these more intimate terrors, there is a smouldering quality even about his more normal work of decoration and portraiture. Recall those full-bosomed angels which from church vaults invite an assignation; in his portrait-gallery, those proud, melancholy, and ineffectual men; those moody and ardent women.

To violent spirits he also commends himself because his horrors are rarely veiled by finesses of workmanship. The color strikes hot and brutal like a blow. There is a preference for murky reds and sulphurous yellows, true colors of the pit. Compare his "Military Execution, May 2, 1808," in the Prado, with Delacroix's "Massacre at Scio," in the Louvre. To the mind, the Frenchman's subject-matter, with its manifold suggestion of slaughter and rapine, is more terrible. We have a father closing dying eyes upon a dishonored family, young beauty dragged to shame, the war reek running through a paradisiacal countryside. The Spaniard's subject-matter is simpler and in a way less horrible. A French firing-squad aims pointblank at half a dozen prisoners who totter above the sprawling bodies of those already shot; new victims are being pushed forward awaiting the discharge. Here is no

wholesale disaster, but an ordinary incident of a military occupation. Yet the picture appalls more than the reality would. One shrinks from that staring, staggering group and the levelled steel. Everything is brusque, intense, cramped. In comparison the "Massacre" of Delacroix is invested with beauty. Lovely workmanship, human pathos, a sense of persisting natural charm, give something of nobility to a theme in itself dreadful enough. With no lack of energy, the scene is meditative, has style and civilization. Goya's execution, on the contrary, is completely unpondered and immediate, the execution as coarse as it is expressive, the whole thing as direct and barbaric as a painting in a neolithic cave. In one case we have the work of a man who felt strongly, but also thought much and reverenced tradition; in the other, of a man who felt acutely, though very narrowly, and reverenced nothing past or present.

Legend has been busily at work to construct a figure diabolical enough to justify the work. The earlier biographers, especially Matheron and Yriarte, have drawn the figure of a malcontent revolutionist in the land of the Inquisition, a seducer, bull-fighter, swashbuckler, full of violence, yet with the nobler velleities of

the romantic superman. German criticism, especially represented by Valerian von Loga, has attacked the legend and drawn us the picture of an exemplary and hard-working artist, chiefly mindful of the main chance, and providing diabolisms for a public that was willing to pay for them. Goya's latest biographer, Hugh Stokes, in a very entertaining but possibly too diffuse book, has followed the sensible middle course of presenting all the facts, while giving the legend for what it is worth. He also gives such an account of Goya's Spain as furnishes a background for the activities of his proud and wrathful spirit. To the springs of this spirit, the legend is the most interesting guide, and, I think, by no means an unfaithful one, but I will choose the more prosaic and gradual approach of the assured facts of Goya's life and of the inferences that may be drawn from his pictures.

Goya's native soil, Aragon, goes far to account for him. The proud and independent realm that bore the brunt of the Moorish wars produced rather men of action than artists. Loyal to the kingship, Aragon was ever impatient of control. Against the formidable aggression of the Inquisition she maintained her

traditional rights. An impatient, pragmatic, virtually democratic feeling radiated from the half-Moorish capital, Zaragoza. Yet the sentiment was hardheaded. Aragon wished to do as pleased her, and was little affected by abstract enthusiasms. A typical Aragonese is the great prime minister, Aranda, Goya's friend and patron. Aranda was tinged with the views of the French Enlightenment. He roused the stolid Charles III to curb the Inquisition and to expel the Jesuits. With equal practicality, when his former French friends became the dethroners of kings and the fomenters of plebeian misrule, Aranda set his face resolutely against the Spanish liberalism he had formerly done much to foster.

Goya had much of the temperament of his great friend. He wanted to gratify the immediate need and to be let alone. He was something of a sceptic, doubtless, but kept on terms with the church; he loved liberty, but hated disorder, except of his own making; he was a good royalist, but naturally scornful of the debasement of an unspeakably corrupt court. These very simple reactions of a vehement and self-willed spirit perfectly explain Goya the satirist, and we have no reason to follow those critics who see in him a youthful Jacobin

dwindling into a middle-aged hypocrite. Goya hailed King Joseph Bonaparte quite as sincerely as he loathed the vacillating Ferdinand VII. It was a chance for peace in Spain to change masters. Goya sketched Arthur Wellesley, the real redeemer of Spain, and tried to shoot him in the studio for an imaginary insult. The incident shows how personal were all the springs of Goya's doings, and how absurd it is to apply to him any sort of philosophico-political label.

Francisco Goya y Lucientes was born in the hamlet of Fuendetodos, near Zaragoza, on March 30, 1746. His father was a peasant risen to the estate of a small tradesman, his mother of gentle stock. When a boy, the legend has it, a benevolent priest found him drawing a pig, a truly prophetic theme for the future author of the "Caprichos," and had him put at painting. What is certain is that at a tender age, and presumably without much previous education, he was accepted in the free academy of the public-spirited Don José Luzan y Martinez at Zaragoza. Here he was trained in approved academic fashion, drawing scrupulously after engravings and from the antique. He is said to have remarked of a Madonna he did in the student years: "Yes, it is mine; but

don't tell anybody." For an impetuous temperament he showed a singular lack of precocity. But this impetuosity was to drive the young provincial far afield. Periodically the partisans of the great miracle church of El Pilar had street fights with the rival parish of La Seo. In one of these brawls, which resulted, besides the usual contusions, in some deaths, young Francisco so prominently captained the champions of Our Lady of the Column that his case came before the Inquisition. His master, who was art censor for that formidable tribunal, doubtless gave the counsel to flee, and young Goya slipped away to Madrid. It was the first of several such flights.

How the nineteen-year-old youth struggled along in the capital we hardly know. His fellow townsman Aranda surely helped him; another Zaragozan, Francisco Bayeu, was a successful court painter, and gave grudging aid.

The great Tiepolo was decorating the ceilings of the palaces, but Goya was no Fragonard to know Tiepolo's worth. Instead he fell under influences which continued his pseudoclassical schooling. The Bohemian adventurer, Anton Rafael Mengs, took him up. Mengs was an excellent portrait-painter in a somewhat stilted style, but a pedant, intellectually under the

thumb of Winckelmann, and just about the worst exemplar Europe could have provided for a genius of Goya's impetuous type. As a matter of fact, Goya seems to have found his way chiefly by the aid of the old masters in the royal collections. The forthright power of Velasquez captivated him from the first. Doubtless the fantastic exaggerations of El Greco fostered his own dreams. I think he must also have admired the quietly severe naturalism of Zurbaran. When the etchings of Rembrandt came his way is not known, but the effect was permanent. No artist of the true Renaissance tradition seems ever to have won his admiration. This was unfortunate, for he was, after all, absorbing the dregs of the tradition from Bayeu and Mengs. The random student days at Madrid were abruptly closed. One night they found him in an alley with a knife in his back. The brawl apparently was of a sort to interest the Inquisition, and once more Goya fled, this time to Rome. A letter of this time is signed "Francisco de los Toros," and it is pretty certain that, like many another high-spirited young Spaniard, Goya, now on his way to Rome, proved himself in the bull-ring.

I doubt if the Eternal City has ever harbored

a less reverent exile. The gayety of Clement XIV's early reign gave him subjects for *genre* pieces, by the sale of which he lived. These have disappeared, perhaps deservedly. By courtesy of the director, Bayeu, he was a student at the Spanish Academy of San Fernando on the Janiculum, but he was probably more interested in the dissipations and rude sports of the Trasteverini below. Certain reckless exploits of his have left their memory. At the risk of his neck, he wrote his name higher on the lantern of St. Peter's than any previous artist. He must have evinced a certain talent, for the Russian ambassador made overtures. Goya had the sense to decline the patronage of the great Catherine. Shortly after his enforced departure from Rome, he won a second prize in a competition held by the Parma Academy, the subject being the victor Hannibal surveying Italy from the Alps. To enter a nunnery on any pretext without permission was a capital offense at Rome, and when Goya was caught within convent walls, he had no better pretext than his desire for a young and charming nun. His neck was more in peril than it had been on the lantern of St. Peter's, but the intercession of the Spanish ambassador gave the young libertine an op-

tion of prompt and perpetual exile, which he naturally accepted. So runs the tradition, and there seems no reason to doubt it. Goya had spent most of the years 1770 and 1771 at Rome. When he returned to Zaragoza, in his twenty-fifth year, it must have seemed that he had put in a ten years' apprenticeship to very little purpose.

Yet Zaragoza did something for her wayward son. The chapter of El Pilar accepted an advantageous offer from him to fresco the vaults of the Chapel of the Sacrament. No further commission followed for many years, and Goya presumably made his way by uncongenial work for provincial churches and monasteries. What remains of this religious decoration is mediocre enough in design and garish in color. Some time in his twenty-ninth year, 1775, Goya married Josefa Bayeu, the sister of his old master. It was this new responsibility that forced a second move to Madrid and a more persistent wooing of fortune. One would wish to know something more of Doña Josefa than is told by her husband's rather unsympathetic portraiture. How did she take his moods? What was her attitude toward his frequent and notorious infi-

delities? She lived in Oriental detachment from the public and social life of her lord; she was kept pretty busy bearing twenty children, all of whom were of an ailing sort. Only one, the son Xavier, lived to grow up. After all, Doña Josefa may have had sufficient *Sturm und Drang* at home to ignore the havoc her gifted spouse was working outside amid aristocratic hearts. Or she may have had the sense to see that the heart was very little involved in these adventures. They lived together nearly thirty years, and the period saw virtually all the greatest work of the master.

His first substantial recognition came gradually and humbly in an appointment as one of several designers for the Royal Tapestry Works in 1776. Mengs had interested himself in that languishing enterprise. Classicist though he was, he was also shrewd enough to perceive the popular value of Goya's sprightly, realistic vein. Goya turned off, first and last, more than forty cartoons, most of which are preserved in the Prado. Without exception, these are illustrations of Spanish life—picnics, dances, fairs, peddlers, ball games, kite-flying, a pretty girl swinging, young gentlefolk in vintage time playing at pastoralism —these are some of the subjects. They are

carried off with ability, shrewd observation, and gusto. The hackneyed comparison with Watteau and Fragonard does them injustice. They have little poetry, either elegiac or erotic. As pure design, they fall midway between narrative and decoration. The color is usually harsh—mere hints for development by the weavers. The cartoons are perhaps more interesting to the student of Spanish customs than to the art-lover. At least, they tided Goya over while his slow-maturing genius was forming.

Meanwhile he was building up a reputation as a portrait-painter, working in the dry and cautious manner of Mengs and Bayeu, but with a drastic fidelity wholly Spanish. Sometimes it seems as if the Spaniards were the only race with sufficient self-esteem to endure sincere portraiture. There is in these early portraits of Goya an odd affinity to the juvenile work of the self-trained American Copley.

Society began to take up the free-living young artist. He was welcomed at the country seat of the Infante Don Luis, whose profligacy had banished him from the austere court of Charles III. From his fortieth year he was a welcome guest of the Duke and Duchess of Osuna. The duke and he shot together. The

country-seat of Alameda came to own some thirty Goyas, some of which presage the diabolical vein of the "Caprichos." He painted the premier, Florida Blanca, and the portrait of the old King as a sportsman, reminiscent of and far inferior to a similar canvas by Velasquez, but his repeated petitions for an appointment as court painter were ignored. Goya's record had not commended him to a martinet sovereign. In these years he made sixteen etchings after the masterpieces of Velasquez, rather fumbling work, but valuable means of study and evidence of a fruitful admiration.

As yet he had done little of lasting worth, though the "Fair of St. Isidro," painted for the Osunas and now in the Prado, is a marvel of panoramic observation and deft denotation. It was the demoralization of Madrid on the accession of the weak and vicious Charles IV, in 1788, that furnished the opportunity for a drastic portraitist and satirist. Goya was now forty-two years old, in the full energy of early middle life.

From his estimable sire Charles IV inherited nothing except a marked tendency to neglect the business of the realm for shooting birds and hares. He had married the haughty and

dissolute Princess of Parma, Maria Luisa. Her minion, the handsome guardsman Manuel Godoy, ruled the land as he willed. The nobility followed the example of sensuality set by the royal pair. "Gallantry and intrigue are terms too refined for this period," wrote a shrewd English visitor to Madrid in the latter days of the old King. Already Goya had enjoyed recognition from his craft, in an election to the Academy of San Fernando in 1780, and in promotion to its presidency in 1785. After the coronation he was welcomed at the court, and on the first vacancy appointed Painter of the Chamber, with a pension. In ten years he painted a score of portraits of the royal family, including that appalling family group of 1800 in the Prado which is perhaps his best-known work. Upon the booby voluptuary Charles IV and his "Courtesan Queen" it is customary for critics of Goya to direct their most effective phrases. Since the Queen, however freely giving, never sold her favors, the term seems inappropriate, while, as to both, a single glance at a good photograph will tell more than pages of the most accomplished rhetoric. I refrain from following the time-honored precedent, and leave the precious royal pair virtually unberated. The famous

family group must occupy us in its turn. Meanwhile, what the King and Queen looked like is told in many portraits, perhaps best in the pair painted about 1790. These full-length canvases are in the Prado, and I hardly know whether most to praise the skill with which the artist has caught the pompous futility of the King, yet reserving for him a certain stereotyped impressiveness, or the keener insight with which he has revealed the masterful woman haunted by the sense that what has burned so ardently is now burning out. Both portraits have the merit, which Goya seldom lacks, of powerful characterization; both have also the usual defect of regarding the spectator too much; neither is quite finely composed. The painting of the black lace of the Queen's gown and mantilla, of the colored sashes of the King, is crisp, yet easy. Goya has fully outgrown the rigidities of the Mengs formula. Where the pictures fall short is in a certain provincial emphasis and absence of style. The neighboring Moros, Velasquezes, and Titians in the Prado do not efface them, but leave them looking a little raw.

Goya's career as a Don Juan reached its height in his forty-sixth year, when he was already a bit lame and deaf, in the classic

liaison with the pretty Duchess of Alba. I say "pretty" advisedly, for such is the record he who knew her best has left of her. It was not his first scandal in the high world. Omitting less credible gossip, there is an anecdote of an importunate husband who, to secure a long-delayed portrait of his wife, turned the studio key upon her and the painter. The portrait was achieved on the delighted husband's return, and a notable addition made to the long list of the painter's gallantries. In fact, the compliancy of the eighteenth-century Spanish husband is one of the interesting by-products of the Goya legend. It came, so the tradition runs, to the ears of the much-betrayed Duke of Alba that Goya was painting his wife as the "Nude Maja." The duke threatened and effected an invasion of the studio. In defense of himself and his mistress, Goya started overnight the diaphanous vision of the "Clothed Maja," and the indignant duke was baffled. The very summary execution of the "Maja Vestida" and the fact that its arrangement seems an improvement over that of the "Maja Desnuda" lend color to the legend, but, first, it is not certain that either Maja was done after the duchess, and, next, it is hard to imagine the state of mind of a patrician husband who

"Clothed Maja," by Goya.

In the Prado, Madrid.

was placated at the sight of his wife as the "Clothed Maja."

For many years after 1782 one will find the imprint of the Duchess of Alba in all the female portraiture of Goya. His sitters seem her sisters. Everybody knows the doll face, distinguished by magnificent black eyes and by its bordering cloud of flowing black hair, the slight arms, full bosom, and waist for which a lace handkerchief were adequate girdle. The simple frocks and falling locks tell that, with all the more sensitive souls of her half-century, the pretty duchess, too, had returned to nature. Perhaps more characteristic, after all, is the little sketch in which, with fan, mantilla, and gracefully turned ankle, she pirouettes on a hilltop and points to a rising thundercloud. Goya, as a slender and elegant youth —he was then forty-seven—bends attentively toward her with extended arms and uncovered head. One wonders if such exposures confirmed his increasing deafness. No other work of art represents so well the eighteenth-century notion of a *grande passion*, conducted in the forms, and ennobling by its fervor an approving, circumambient nature. Before Goya there had been various notable bull-fighters, but his too open devotion scandalized even Maria

Luisa. The duchess was exiled to her estates in Andalusia in 1793 and took her painter along. Here, amid a nature no longer pictorial but actual, the grand passion soon sunk to mediocrity, at least on her side. Goya bore some grudge, for in certain etchings of the "Caprichos," which he was preparing in 1795, one may recognize the fickle duchess, once with a double face and again with flickering bats' wings.

The waning of a passion, deafness, weakened eyesight, years of nervous tension, were the conditions under which the "Caprichos" took form. To compare the set and sour profile which accompanied the famous album with the little sketch of Goya and the pretty duchess before the thundercloud, is instructive. A year or two at most lies between the gallant lover and the grim old man dreaming unhallowed dreams. In the years of discontent and illness following 1793 Goya tossed off scores of these sketches. Soon he began to work them over into etchings, using the new aquatint process to obtain powerful light and shade. Two hundred copies he printed off himself and issued in 1798. This edition comprised seventy-two plates, eight being added later. The French officers in Spain sent copies home, and

Goya, till then unknown beyond the Pyrenees, became generally famous as a caricaturist.

In a rejected draft for a prospectus, he declares that he has "chosen subjects which afford opportunities to turn into ridicule and stigmatize those prejudices, impostures, and hypocrisies which have been consecrated by time." This programme only holds true of what we may call the bestiary portion. The ass is exalted in all his complacent moods, playing human parts; the ape remains the critic of the long-eared hero. A typical picture is the ape painting the portrait of a lolling, crowned donkey, whose mask on the canvas is beginning to assume the lofty traits of the lion —trenchant satire of the function of a court painter. Again a half-human monster with shaggy legs and hoofs reclines on the swinging globe and holds up by the ankles an elated man whose wild eyes fail to see the predecessors discarded and hurtling down through space. The bestial inconsequence of the awards of fortune is the meaning. It is interesting to compare the notion with the mediæval and wholly mechanical idea of Fortune's wheel. Dame Fortune was merely ruthless by higher impersonal necessity; Goya's satyr world-spirit is exultantly malevolent.

More than thirty plates are descriptive of the follies of Madrid life, with especial regard to the courtesans. The mood is generally too mild and tolerant to be called satirical. We have the frail creature pulling up a stocking over a slender leg, buffeted with much lifting of skirts by the blast from the Sierra, spied on by the police, or led pitifully to execution. Usually Goya is on her side; yet the sense of the ineluctable war of sex was also strong in him, and has received its most drastic symbol in the plate representing a harpy on a tree top with feathered men of all estates fluttering about her proud head. The second act is shown at the foot of the tree, where a beatific witch superintends the plucking of one of these male pigeons by two plump and comely wenches. One holds the stripped wing, while the other sets both hands to the tail-feathers. The ignominy of sex obsession has never been put more strongly.

The witch and demon series of the "Caprichos" is the most original and baffling. Here we have fiends—bat-winged, bestial, howling down the wind, clipping each other's claws; witches clutching each other frantically as they fly, seated in council—the whole repertory of diabolical possession hit off with such

gusto and power that one can hardly believe that Goya is merely turning the imposture of witchcraft to ridicule. The plate which leads the Walpurgisnacht series represents a young man with bent head haunted by foul and monstrous faces. The motto is: "When reason dreams monsters rise" (*El sueño de la razón monstruos*). Plainly we have Goya indulging hallucination. Indeed, the simplest and possibly the truest explanation of Goya's diabolism is that he was merely an inverted Blake, seeing foul where Blake saw fair; both hallucinated, and both more or less controlling and utilizing their hallucinations. Yet the witch series was no casual incident in Goya's work. In old age, when he set up his suburban home, he painted a flight of witches following one who ambiguously fingers a human embryo, and a witches' Sabbath presided over by a goat-like Satan, with a distinguished lady in fascinated attention. The witch notion was deeply burnt into his mind. Possibly he believed more or less in witchcraft. Malign beliefs are stubborn and persist in sceptics who have renounced consoling faiths. When we recall Goya's eminently sensual life, and also that demonology in the eighteenth century had sunk to be the accessory of lust, it seems likely

enough that a certain amount of experience may have aided nightmare. He was the sort of man who may have dabbled in such orgies as Jacques Casanova records. If so, fascination should mingle with scorn and loathing in these designs, and this is just about the impression they make. No inventions are more instinct with love of the grewsome for its own sake, and the grewsome here has generally a tinge of the filthy. The element of foulness in the "Caprichos," though implicit rather than overt, is unmistakable.

Whether the artist should stir certain turbid depths of consciousness, or rather whether he should be encouraged in so doing, is an interesting case in theoretical morals. It is hardly a practical case, for the kind of artist who wants this expression of his lower self cares little whether he be encouraged or not. As a matter of fact, Goya sold off his copies of the "Caprichos" promptly, nor is the fact merely significant of the depravity of Madrid at the end of the eighteenth century. If the turbid depths were to be stirred, at least it was done with masculine energy, with unfailing pith and variety. Personally, I do not think that any robust person is the worse for the peculiar tingling shudder of the "Caprichos," and I am still

more certain that an unrobust person will take little harm from them, since such a person will be immediately revolted.

It was undoubtedly the moral reaction of Hamerton against these designs that made him declare Goya a poor etcher. In a narrow sense that is true. There is little refinement of workmanship in these plates. The line is brittle, the strokes sometimes feverishly overmultiplied, the contrasts extremely harsh, the aquatint hurriedly and rather crudely spread over the etched skeleton, the sense of form occasionally pretty weak—in such purely technical regards, the "Caprichos" may be regarded as merely so much bad etching, but bad etching, after all, only as applied to other designs than Goya's, say, to such caprices as Hamerton would have permitted himself. In much the same sense, the style of Rabelais would be truly bad if imposed upon the thinking of Matthew Arnold, and vice versa. If to express meaning is the main thing, then the coarse and direct method of the "Caprichos" has peculiar merits. Its flashing of crude contrasts is sinister. If it recks little of form—and this not always—it gives the keenest impression of character and motion. Those artists who deal in the dynamic expression of character can find

no more accomplished model. Delacroix and Daumier knew what they were about when they went to school with the albums upon which vehement caricaturists have been nurtured ever since. It was no merely foolish or depraved taste that carried the half-Gothic semiobscenities of the "Caprichos" across Europe at the very moment when Louis David was clamping down upon the art of painting the rigid formulas of pseudoclassicism. Goya's caricatures are hacked out, spat out, with hate and scorn and licking of chops. Whoever cannot stand this kind of art may as well, once for all, be warned away. Others will find value, and even a manner of instruction, in an uprush of temperament so blatantly self-sufficing and, as the course of events proved, so wholly prophetic.

The period of Goya's greatness as a painter coincides with one of extreme disaster for Spain, the eve and midnight of the Napoleonic wars. He found inspiration alike in the imbecility of his Bourbon patrons and in the rough heroism of such partisan captains as Juan Martin, solace in the soft comeliness of the Madrileñas and in the more accentuated charms of the actresses of the day. In his dec-

orations for the Church of San Antonio de la Florida his audacious imputation of carnality to the saints and the very angels reaches its height. He had arrived at a fame to which everything was permitted. His portraits from 1795 for fifteen years have the old aggressive accent, but carry themselves with more composure and assurance. To enumerate the best is impossible. Typical examples of his successful portraiture of women are the stiffly posed but vital group of the Countess of Montijo and her four daughters in the Liria Palace, Madrid, a palpitating complex of warm and amiable femininity; the petulant "Bookseller of the Calle de las Carretas"; the self-confident effigy of the actress La Tirana, somewhat stolidly facing the footlights, and, in the collection of Mr. Philip Lehman, New York, a seated portrait of a plump and powdered beauty looking out with due complacency over spreading flounces of loveliest peachy hue and lightness—these are pure Goya. Among male portraits of highest excellence are the arrogant, potent, fleshly face of the toreador Costillares, Goya's predecessor, rumor insisted, in the graces of the Duchess of Alba; the austere and somewhat shrinking figure of the poet Moratin; the ardent, hirsute mask of the patriot Juan

Martin; the hawk-like sketch of Arthur Wellesley. These are startling, perturbing, impressive visions—salient, casual, yet significant documents rudely torn from life's book. The artistry is greater than before, but still not the finest; the accent of civilization is neither sought for nor attained.

Goya was, after all, more than half a caricaturist and illustrator. His power in the latter capacity may best be felt in the episode of the 2d of May with which our survey began. His position as a painter in the narrower sense may perhaps most readily be ascertained from a study of the two Majas and of the family group of Charles IV. Thus a few steps in the Prado will inform one, not concerning his diabolism and the vast variety of his invention, but at least as to the pieces which may most fairly meet the inevitable comparison with similar work of the great masters.

That the two Majas were done from the pretty duchess is not certain. They may simply be, like many later works, reminiscent of her charms. Indeed, it is hard to reconcile their customary date, 1799, with her being the sitter. Yet, when it is recalled that she owned the famous "Venus" of Velasquez, it was

"The Toreador Pedro Romero," by Goya.
In the Collection of Mr. Archer M. Huntington.

natural enough that she should wish to have similarly commemorated her own certainly not inferior graces. She and the "Venus" are in any case the starting-point for the Majas, and chronology must reconcile itself with that fact. The "Nude Maja," rosy from top to toe, balanced consciously upon her silvery cushions, feet brought together with bewitchingly natural awkwardness, head abandoned to the hands clasped behind it, yet directed with provocative appeal toward all the world, hips and breasts thrust forward, is a true eighteenth-century Astarte. In comparison with her, the half-pagan nudities of the *école galante* are ineffectual; only Fragonard, and he exceptionally, has so fully spoken the word of the flesh. The painting is of the most featherlike lightness, and only escapes oversweetness from the sharp carnal flavor of the whole. The criticism of such a picture is difficult, involving eventually the more complex issues where art and morals touch. In the sense that a definite emotion pungently expressed radiates from it, it is a masterpiece. Until lately the authorities shut it away in a private room, showing, if a certain lack of æsthetic courage, a perfectly just sense of moral values. Astarte unveiled will always be a perilous spectacle for those

who cannot see life quite steadily and whole. It will not commend the picture to moralists that Manet's copy of the "Maja Desnuda" solaced the last drug-clouded days of Charles Baudelaire, and moralists have, despite much current sophistry, much to say in the matter.

The place of the "Nude Maja" may best be found by comparing her with other famous nudes. Naturally, the idealism of the Greeks is out of the comparison, but take Titian's "Danaë" or the "Venus Listening to Music" in the same gallery, his "Bacchante" overcome by love and wine, how cosmic, necessary, and noble their animality, after all, is. Velasquez's plebeian "Venus" has a saving and wholesome athleticism. Manet's "Olympe," frankly derivative as she is from the "Maja," has more suggestion of life and character apart from her professional utility, and is, I think, more beautifully painted. The "Maja" is Orientally soft and specialized, and symbolizes the least significant aspect of sex—symbolizes it quite superbly.

For the reason given by the legend or otherwise, the fancy took Goya to represent the same model in the same pose, lightly clothed in the white linen breeches and bolero of a Span-

ish dandy. He bettered the composition a little, bringing the frame nearer the figure, and laying the coquettish form more slashingly athwart the oblong. The actual painting is volatile to frothiness. The tinge of vulgarity in the "Nude Maja" is increased in the clothed version. The glance is more insistent, the effect more seductive. Startling and effective the picture is, but the reservations already made apply in higher degree. The Majas embody, after all, just a sportsman's ideal of a fine woman.

The great portrait group of "Charles IV and His Family" is a more serious matter. It enlisted Goya's love of reality, his measured admiration, and an almost surer guarantee of a fine picture—his scorn. It is a group of quite magnificent portraits, the painter's own bulldog face being not the worst, but I cannot regard it as a fine portrait group. The characterization of the individuals is superb, and better modulated than is usual with Goya, who generally imposes his own mood upon all sitters. The domineering turn of the Queen, appropriately the central figure, the sinister stolidity of the King, the skull-like face of an aunt which glowers behind so much frivolous young life, the thoroughly genteel ineptitude of the

Crown Prince, the amiable exuberance of the easy-living Luis of Parma and his wife, the precocious sensitiveness of the little Maria Isabella—all this is of Goya's best. The whole thing vividly suggests the Bourbon incapacity either for learning or forgetting. Few pictures are of higher historic significance. Goya spared no pains upon it. Some of his most admirable sketches were made in preparation. Yet the group would barely hold its own with a family group by Sir Joshua, much less by Copley. It breathes an intenser life, but it lacks unconsciousness and ease. The sense of space is weak in it, as it often is with Goya, the atmosphere is torrid and unbreathable, the color, however varied, is in appearance tarnished. The royal figures have the defect of standing rather awkwardly in unharmonized poses. It is plain that he who greatly values arrangement, style, harmony, mind in painting will think this impressive canvas less than a great masterpiece. He who sets no store by style, but wants merely trenchant notation of casual appearance, may well find his æsthetic law and gospels in the "Charles IV and His Family." All insurgents against the tradition of the Renaissance have naturally found their warrant in what, if it be not Goya's masterpiece, at least

contains within a single frame a number of masterpieces of drastic portraiture.

The early years of the new century were Goya's heroic period, full of disaster for himself and for Spain. In 1804, his fifty-eighth year, his wife died. Most of his intimates were taken away about the same time. Doubly isolated by bereavement and deafness, he continued as court painter of the treacherous Ferdinand VII, who in 1808 ousted his incompetent father. Napoleon's armies had already overrun the Peninsula, which had reacted in the most bitter and heroic of partisan insurgency. When the old King was. taken away by the French, May 2, 1808, Madrid rose in patriotic if foolish revolt. Murat hurled his "Mamelukes" through the unarmed mob, and the day closed in massacre and the rattle of firing-squads before which the captives were pushed indiscriminately. A few days later a deaf old man made a strange exhibition before a crowd of idlers. Dipping his handkerchief in the mud of the gutter, he sketched on a wall the turbaned horsemen riding down Spanish men and women armed only with the national knife. Whether this was a taunt or a compliment, the sketcher in mud did not say. It is more important to note that it was the first idea for the

great canvas now in the Prado. It is a weltering, confused, and ferocious work, overpowering but less significant than its companion piece, the "Military Execution by the French," which is of steel-like clarity. Late in the year began the terrible siege which ended in the sacking of his native Zaragoza. He visited the smoking ruins, just escaping being shot as a spy on the way. He painted the portrait of the alien King Joseph Bonaparte, and, under orders, selected the pictures to be seized by the conquerors. He absolved the ungrateful commission like a patriot, helping select fifty that would hardly be missed.

The trip to Zaragoza had burned in certain pictures of a ravaged country, and when, in failing health, Goya once more forsook the brush for the etching-needle these impressions took form in the eighty-two plates which were published in 1863, long after his death, by the Academy of San Fernando. There never was an album less academic than "Los Desastres de la Guerra." It is an unsparing record of actual butchery and rapine. Even in Napoleonic times, which accepted such spectacles as matter of common experience, Goya only dared circulate a few proofs. The reek of the human garbage heap is revealed with an emphasis

horrible, yet wholly true, and the actual portrait of clotted bodies with lopped-off limbs, of bawling humans staggering out from under burning rafters, of virgins dragged away by sweating ravishers—the sufficient horror of all this is enhanced by a sense of overruling malignity, of a world delivered over to the vilest and most destructive passions. The "Desastres" is a raw and throbbing bit of life in its basest manifestation, in its least human aspect. When I saw and smelled overturned Messina, I verified the outer veracity of Goya's picture, but there was dignity in the impersonal awfulness of the catastrophe. Dignity there could not be in the "Desastres de la Guerra." It is an inferno of the most truthful sordidness. Such a work is profoundly moral or wholly revolting or both, as you choose to take it. The only critical question that fairly arises—for something more or less than art is involved—is that of the artist's attitude. Was he wholly moved by fierce indignation at the outrage, or did his sinister spirit find also a certain pleasure in the very extravagance of these terrors? The similarity of certain themes and forms in the "Desastres" to the nightmares which he deliberately contrived for the adornment of his suburban home, and presumably for his own

delight, suggests that we should not too readily admit the "Desastres" as in intention a peace document.

The "Desastres" was completed in 1813, Goya's sixty-seventh year. The remaining fifteen years form an unexpected peaceful epilogue. He became a detached artist. Painting was on the whole in abeyance in favor of etching and, later, of the new art of lithography. In 1818, on the restoration of the despised Ferdinand, Goya seriously considered leaving Spain. Instead, he retired to the little house on the fickle Manzanares, and with his decorations soon made a kind of witches' kitchen of the new home. A grass-widow second cousin, Leocardia Weiss, became housekeeper, and she brought with her a niece, Rosario, who lived long enough to comfort the painter's declining days, and developed a certain talent as a miniature painter. In 1815 Goya issued a few copies of the "Bull-Fights," the "Tauromaquia," in thirty-three plates. It is done with more care than most of his etchings, and has undiminished vigor. Rembrandt and the more recent Venetian etchers have been studied to good purpose. Everything considered, this is the most desirable of Goya's albums, though,

as the most normal, it is also the least characteristic, and the official edition of 1855, from the Royal Calcografía, is none too good. The twenty-two plates of "Los Proverbios," eighteen of which were published by the Academy in 1850, is in the main merely a sequel to the "Caprichos." Still it contains the highly imaginative and even prophetic design of flying men, which, amplified, is also represented by a superb canvas in an American private collection.

When Goya left Madrid for France in 1824, his seventy-eighth year, he probably had no clearer reason than the discontent of a restless and invalid old age and the absence of any real bonds at home. At the Paris salon of 1824 he saw a far more accomplished application of some of his own theories of painting in the landscapes of Constable and in Delacroix's "Massacre at Scio." It is of record that he admired the work of the young romantic, and even more that of Baron Gros. Géricault was still the sensation of the hour, and it is strange that Paris paid no especial attention to a visitor whose ways it was rapidly, if unconsciously, adopting. Goya soon withdrew to Bordeaux, where, with occasional absences and visits to Spain, he was a diligent and venerable figure

in the Spanish colony for his few remaining years. He took up lithography, and did some splendid large plates of bull-fights; he invented a short way of doing miniatures by smoking the ivory and rubbing a drop of water about with the thumb, and attended to little Rosario's artistic education. To the impoverished refugees he was a ready benefactor, to his mediocre son Xavier a sagacious counsellor. The turbulent life was to close on a note of ripeness and wisdom. His feeble health and imprudent wanderings caused much anxiety to his intimates, and, when apoplexy carried him off swiftly, on April 16, 1828, in his eighty-third year, it may have been something of a relief. He was buried in the cemetery of the Chartreuse, and his body lay there undisturbed for sixty years, until Spain reclaimed it in 1888. For a generation before the translation, he had been a spiritual leader among all the insurgents against the academic tradition. Delacroix, Daumier, Manet, Regnault, had done him homage, by word and by imitation. He is today, with El Greco, the Spanish master most honored by the emancipated art student.

His primacy as a forerunner of the anti-academic revolt is merited, not merely by his

practice, but by his few recorded opinions. Nature, Rembrandt, and Velasquez—surely an anti-academic trinity—were avowedly his gods. "Always lines and never body," he once protested. "But where do we find these lines in nature? I can only see masses in light, and masses in shadow, planes which recede, reliefs or backgrounds." Here we have virtually the programme of Couture. Yet Goya fell short of the modern notion of construction in pure color. His own color is not quite organic, but conceived as light and shade. "In nature color does not exist any more than line," he told a friend. "There is but the sun and the shadows. Give me a piece of charcoal, and I will make you a picture." Evidently he had advanced only half-way toward Manet. His vindication of the artist's freedom of invention, conveyed in a discarded preface to the "Caprichos," allies him to the artistic movements of to-day. Imitation of nature is difficult and admirable, but let us also admire "a method which leaves nature out of the question and reveals to our eyes forms and movements existing only in the imagination. . . . The artist must be allowed the title of inventor, and ceases to be a mere servile copyist."

This is the modern note. It naturally met

opposition from those to whom modernism is anathema. Ruskin in 1872 found a fine copy of the "Caprichos" at F. S. Ellis's, the bookseller's, besought him to burn the accursed thing, and was obeyed. Hamerton visited the Goya exhibition at Paris in 1878, and hurried home to write that the Spaniard had a foul mind, had risen to notoriety chiefly from his legend as a revolutionist, and delivered the more telling thrust that he was a slovenly and rather incompetent etcher. Both parties, each from its own point of view—the modernists and the authors of *Modern Painters* and *The Intellectual Life*—are right.

We may best reconcile the contradiction by inquiring where lies the value of Goya's work. Surely not in the execution, which is often slack. Goya seldom shows fine arrangement; he cared nothing about it. His draftsmanship is at times negligent, his color seldom harmonized, and frequently rather hot and stuffy. The value of his work must then lie in the sheer turbulent emotion that begot it, which sometimes contains much that is morally questionable. And this prompts the further inquiry, Where lies the value of art in general?—a question easier to set than to answer. Yet a tentative answer must be essayed unless we are to

leave all criticism the mere play of contending temperaments. It will probably be agreed that the creative act—and naturally its appreciation as well—includes two elements, one of expansive impulse and one of restrictive discipline, and that the supreme work of art grows out of a just fusion of these two elements. Artists may be classed as they approach one or the other extreme. In some—Raphael, Vermeer, Velasquez—the discipline is so patent that the impulse may seem weak and defective, but it is there all the same. In others, as Tintoretto and Rembrandt, the impulse is so evident that discipline seems absent, but all the same it is there. Only a few artists, like Rubens and Titian, arrive at a serene balance of the two elements, and the tragedy of some of the noblest works of art, Michelangelo's and the best of Rodin's, lies precisely in the tenseness and instability of the equilibrium between the expansive and restrictive mood.

Whether we should choose for impulse or discipline seems to me an idle issue. Impulse utterly without discipline is mere formless fury or febrile vaporing, while discipline wholly uninformed by impulse is, if conceivable, wholly void and negligible, mere dusty algebra of the mechanical mind.

As for Goya, he plainly belongs pretty far up or down, as you choose to put it, on the side of impulse. There is a minimum of discipline about him. He has the obvious faults of insurgency when untempered by tradition. His eminent literary congener, Byron—and in many respects Goya is the most Byronic of painters—had more of saving historic sense. His insurgency was more central and less provincial. This is not to say that Goya is not a large and significant figure. He felt tremendously, and this is value. We must beware of considering the artist as a satisfactory ratio. It is true that in the finest art discipline will carry creation a remove from life, or, rather, will ally it with the more disciplined forms of life. Goya's art is never at this remove. Its lurid orbit swings in the perilous border-line where art and raw life meet. This unhallowed limbo has no more distinguished denizen than Francisco Goya, and, because his art arises largely from confusion and revolt, it will always excite; even where it does not satisfy, it will instruct, not on the terms of the balanced artists, but with a hurtling emphasis all its own. In his waiver of civilization he was true to his peasant blood and to his Spanish breeding. He may be regarded merely as an inversion of

those seventeenth-century artists who filled Spain with agonized Christs and tortured martyrs. Diabolize one of these early masters, deprive him of the leading of the church, turn him loose in a disordered and despicable Spain, energize him more highly, and you will have something very like the insolent master of Zaragoza. To produce a central art Spain has never yet attained adequate civilization. Her triumphs are legitimately read in the aristocratic individualism of Velasquez, in the grotesque fantasy of El Greco, in the turbulent emotionalism of Goya. That he was not unworthy of the great predecessors whom he venerated is surely praise enough for him.

V

REMBRANDT AFTER THREE CENTURIES, 1906

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During his own life, Rembrandt's fame, once considerable, sank into obscurity. For a full century later he was virtually forgotten. His was the fate of all artists at odds with their times. How this great visionary came to be the consummate master of the Dutch school, and withal the least Dutch of its masters, remains something of an enigma. We find the eulogists differing as widely as the older critics. He is lauded as a precursor of impressionism, as a profound portraitist, as the truest interpreter of Bible story, as the greatest of etchers, even as a masterful colorist. Some have boldly hailed him as the chief of naturalists. Many of these things Rembrandt was—so inclusive was his life-work; all of them he might have been—so versatile and persistent was his genius. Painters, who are likely to be right in such matters, regard him as the inventor of a peculiarly rich and vibrant chiaroscuro, which became a remarkable medium of expression—hinting at the mystery of personality, and containing, as it were, all the springs of human pathos.

On the technical side Taine said the last word of Rembrandt's characteristic style—namely, "his figures swim in the air, like a fish in the water"; or, again, "the atmosphere is the principal personage of the picture." Such statements should be accepted with a difference; they do emphatically point the truth that every late canvas of the master is a battle-field, in which the shadow surges up to the tiny citadel held by the high light, which in turn resists the gloom and struggles outward through the deepest shadows, being always conqueror in the end. Similarly, his figures do not assert themselves brusquely and once for all in fixed contours, but grow out of the darkness as a kind of emanation. The eye never completely ascertains them, but reveals them increasingly, as forms are divined at twilight. Nothing seems set and arranged for the convenience of the onlooker, of whom is required something of the visionary quality of the artist. With considerable technical differences, Whistler and Carrière have sought the same effect of an evasive reality.

It is important to note that the mystery of Rembrandt, his effacement of the line and simplification of the masses, is based on a perfect knowledge of the actual forms. One has only

to compare the early "Anatomy Lesson" with the later "Syndics" to perceive that the contrast is not between representing forms and neglecting them, but between two kinds of representation, of which the later is both the more difficult and the more accurate. The clinic of Doctor Tulp is painted with a solidity and relief almost sculptural, suggesting, in fact, the touch of the finger rather than the observation of the eye. Each head is painted as if seen by itself; there is no charm of color; the merit lies in superb academic draftsmanship, in grasp of character, and, negatively, in suppression of the more revolting features of the subject. In such a picture Rembrandt appears as a cautious, laborious talent, a formidable rival to the Van der Helsts and other "corporation" painters, but essentially of their sort, after all. In the "Syndics," painted at the end of his career, there is greater actuality and unity—the glamour and mystery in which these grave committeemen are invested strangely contributing to the sense that these are substantial presences. In short, following the almost universal course of successful genius, Rembrandt prevailed by means of a conscientious academic tutelage, the minute method of which he finally abandoned in favor of a highly

individual and syncopated method of seeing and working. He is successful in putting his own passionate vision of the world upon canvas, because first he has mastered the dry record of the average eye.

In Rembrandt's etchings—the peddling of which kept him afloat through disastrous years—the real Rembrandt, the Rembrandt of mystery and of the searching, yet fluttering eye, appears much earlier than in the paintings. The etched line indicates the whole character of the pose, the suffusion of the figure with light, the tremor that indicates motion incipient or just arrested. A very little study of the etchings will show how early Rembrandt came to that curiously profound and troubled vision by which we know him best. The fact suggests that his earlier and drier portraits represent, as one might suppose, less his natural predilection than a conscious apprenticeship to the distasteful but indispensable severities of his art.

If criticism of Rembrandt's finished art has erred seriously, it is in claiming for his use of light and shade and air a ground in realism. As a matter of fact, it would be hard to imagine a more abstract means of expression. Critics seek rather idly the basis of his golden shadows

in the half-light of his home. What such an interior was like we know very accurately from the pictures of De Hooch; but Rembrandt deals in light and shade that never were except in his own imagination. He pays the slightest attention to times of day and to all problems in specific lighting, choosing merely the illumination that best conveys his mood. Thus he has little to do with the modern luminists. His irradiated shadow is a glamour that his brooding spirit imposes upon the world. For this reason he is an unsafe model, as was shown by the artistic shipwreck of most of his scholars and imitators. He invented his half-light only that he might people that golden "darkness visible" with types of human tenderness and pathos.

No one so well as he has realized the universal humanity of the Bible narrative—its direct appeal to the heart. How understandingly he has stripped these scenes of all hieratic associations, of all merely learned or traditional sophistications! "Christ before the Doctors," "The Raising of Lazarus," "Abraham and Isaac," "The Flight into Egypt"—these are representative of the subjects he has treated in all simplicity. As no other artist, he has grasped the beauty of the homely Prot-

estant conception of the Bible. Rembrandt somehow managed to walk with God's folk of old in humble and friendly fashion. They were his neighbors and real visitants, and with them he used a frankness in striking contrast to the caprice that made him travesty himself and his bodily sitters in all manner of studio trappings. In short, when we speak of realism in Rembrandt, we mean simply his sincerity of emotion—his peculiar meditative pathos. His portraits, for example, as compared with those of Titian, of Hals, or, better, of Velasquez, are highly unreal and conventional, but it is a convention that expresses admirably the penetrative insight and broad sympathy of the painter-poet of Amsterdam. The realist sets a person in a canvas; Rembrandt fills a canvas with a personality.

No school and no nation may fairly claim Rembrandt. He deliberately forewent the sober excellence of color and solidity of design that make the Dutch school great. With small pride as an inventor of methods, he elaborated a procedure that no one has imitated with safety. Unriddling the mystery of light and shade, he forbore to complete his discovery, utilizing it only so far as it served his limited pictorial message; with a remarkable

sense of the value of color, he used it only as a casual grace to enliven his monochrome. At every point one perceives the sacrifice of artistic breadth to profundity. Rembrandt is the most solitary figure in art, for, apparently, no sense of superiority or pride of artistry sustained him; yet this isolated figure brings to human emotions the just and all-embracing sympathy of a little child.

The sun shines upon the just and unjust, and so the illuminated dusk of Rembrandt embraces without discrimination the beautiful and the unbeautiful. It is, in fact, the beauty of the picture, and the form is largely incidental—a mere centre of coruscation. Nothing more clearly marks him off from the classical tradition than his refusal to impute through style a beauty that does not lie in the subject. By what seems a kind of good luck, he has painted a few pictures of a peculiarly living and tremulous grace. One recalls the little "Susannah," of the Louvre, or, better, the "Finding of Moses," now in Mr. J. G. Johnson's collection—a picture that, with greater seriousness, has the romantic elegance of a Watteau. Such rare examples show that Rembrandt was great, not merely in his achievements, but in his renunciations.

VI

VERMEER OF DELFT

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In his early thirties, Jan Vermeer, of Delft, was conspicuous enough in his native town to be looked up by the French traveller Balthazar de Monconys. The interview is recorded with tantalizing brevity in Balthazar's *Journal des Voyages*, published in 1665: "At Delft, I saw the painter Vermeer, who had none of his own works, but we saw one at a baker's, which, though it had only one figure, had been sold at six hundred livres." It may be suspected that the baker was something less than the Mæcenas he appeared, for ten years later Vermeer's widow had a suit with a baker to whom two pictures had been pledged for precisely this sum. Vermeer's honorable, if short and unprosperous, career is represented to-day by half a dozen civic dates and by some thirty-seven magnificent pictures. On October 31, 1632, the year of Rembrandt's "Anatomy Lesson," he was born in the clean and delightful town of Delft. Of his parents' condition and his own early education we know nothing. April 5, 1653, in his twenty-first year, he took

a wife, Catharine Bolenes. They settled in the Old Long Dyke, and in twenty-two years of wedded life she bore him ten children, of whom eight survived their father. Eight months after his marriage, December 29, 1653, he joined the Painters' Guild of St. Luke. It was three years and a half before he fully paid his initiation fee of only six florins. Nevertheless, in 1662, his fellow painters made him head man of the guild. He served for two years, and again for the same space in 1670 and 1671. He died on the 16th day of December, 1675, early in his forty-fourth year, and was entombed in the Old Church. Twenty years after his death his pictures were still esteemed. In an Amsterdam auction of 1696 twenty of his pictures—the list is still the basis for identification of his works—fetched very fair prices. Then followed more than a century and a half of obscuration.

His pictures, to be sure, for the most part survived, but were casually attributed to other artists—to Terborch and Pieter de Hooch, which was tolerable; to Metsu, which was somewhat less so, and to Eglon van der Neer, which was atrocious. When the indefatigable John Smith was compiling his *Catalogue Raisonné* of Flemish and Dutch paintings, about 1840, Vermeer

received only incidental mention. But the moment of rehabilitation was at hand, for Vermeer as for so many other forgotten artists. Before 1848, the year of revolutions, Bürger-Thoré had begun to hunt up and buy Vermeers. His comprehensive essays, which appeared in the *Gazette des Beaux-arts* for 1866, had the natural defects of all literature of discovery. Your true explorer is prone to see more than is there, and subsequent criticism has had to abate by half Thoré's list of some seventy-two Vermeers. It required still a generation to bring the world round to Thoré's feeling that Vermeer was a great master. As fine a critic as Fromentin could pass through the Netherlands in 1876 with only bare mention of Vermeer. Gradually the writings of Henri Havard and Doctor Bode did something to popularize the master, but the movement of modern art was making even more strongly for a revival. Hals and Velasquez had already been consulted by Manet and his fellow impressionists. The generation represented by Degas had need of a still more exquisite exemplar. Vermeer became *par excellence* the painters' old master. Long before the dealers had perceived in him a sensational commodity, he was the shibboleth of cosmopolitan studios everywhere. In-

deed, in one way and another he had anticipated many of the technical researches of the '60s and '70s. Nor was his spell there exhausted. As febrile an experimentalist as Vincent van Gogh was entranced by the poise and nobility of "The Reader" in the Rijksmuseum.

Scholarship and criticism have of late years amply confirmed the verdict of the studios. Hofstede de Groot's monumental catalogue of the works of Karel Fabritius and Vermeer, 1907, was followed by the excellent little monograph of Gustave van Zype, not to mention a number of special articles by many hands, and lately Philip Hale, an excellent painter himself, and a veteran teacher and critic, has devoted to Vermeer the most elaborate stylistic analysis ever applied to any artist.

To one who has ever found Vermeer a painter of the most personal and intimate charm, Mr. Hale's judgments come with a shock. Vermeer is treated as a cold realist, chiefly concerned with problems of lighting, values, edges. He was a pure eye: "He simply painted right on, striving to get the appearance of things." Subject-matter was indifferent to him, save as it was convenient or challenged his dexterity. "It may be said that Vermeer's vision was as impersonal as that of any painter who has ever

lived." He was not "primarily a painter of women in the sense that Gainsborough was, or Watteau, but one guesses it was more convenient for him to get them to pose." His works are "simply coldly and definitely right, and they gain something of the hatred which those who are right must always endure." If this were the truth, and the whole truth, about Vermeer, my task would soon be done. I should only have to epitomize Mr. Hale's admirable analysis of Vermeer's composition, values, tone, textures, edges, and repeat his warning to sentimentalists against merely subjective interpretations. But Mr. Hale's entire critique is a signal illustration of the fact that a half-truth is more misleading than a flagrant falsehood. Vermeer was a great realist, and much more, and the much more is what greatly counts, and what we must endeavor to find. There is an established principle by which the artist tends to recreate the world in his own image, and the Vermeer reconstructed by Mr. Hale is amusingly like some able but not sufficiently appreciated member of the Boston school of painting, worthily pedestalled on unpopular heights. With a singular lack of humor, Vermeer is represented as a misliked artist. In this Vermeer I recognize as in a re-

morselessly skilful caricature certain traits of the artist that I love, but the whole picture seems so distorted that I must essay a far simpler portraiture of my own.

The aim of criticism is always to reconstitute a superior personality. If we stop with the mere analysis of his technic, we fail to explain why he ever undertook to create, for the motives to production, at least in the case of a great artist, involve the whole man, and especially his emotional life. His finest thoughts and feelings are the only value in his art. These thoughts and feelings are, of course, expressed by means of his technic. But if we study it merely for itself, we fall short of the vision of the artist. To him it was no cold device for simulating difficult reality, but the symbol of his dearest emotions. These symbols we must endeavor to read. Such reading, naturally, is more or less inferential, but at worst it will be truer to the facts than is the figment of the artist as a mere prestidigitator in a world from which all but art has been scrupulously eliminated. By a simple analysis of Vermeer's subject-matter we may ascertain his preferences. What, then, are admittedly the finest Vermeers?

The finest Vermeers, almost without exception, have no more ambitious subject-matter than a young and usually capable woman engaged in some household occupation. Sometimes she is a milkmaid, carefully pouring milk in her buttery (Amsterdam), or as a placid housewife, with one splendid gesture, she grasps a ewer, while with the other hand she opens a casement (Metropolitan Museum). Sometimes she stands at a window and with gently bent head reads a letter (Dresden, Amsterdam). In the loveliest of all the Vermeers, at Berlin, she only holds out a string of pearls from her fair throat. In one hardly less fine, she is carefully weighing pearls in a balance (Widener collection). Again, in more girlish guise, she bends with unconscious grace over the lace cushion and bobbins (the Louvre). To these may be added the exquisitely candid portrait of a young girl at The Hague. I have named most of the finest Vermeers. Clearly drama or narrative is not of their essence. Sometimes Vermeer's housewife is engaged in a more gentle occupation. She is writing (Morgan collection), playing a guitar or lute (Johnson and Huntington collections), playing the spinet (Beit collection and National Gallery), or standing at the virginals (National

Gallery). Of Vermeer's thirty-five figure pieces, twenty-two contain only one figure, in nineteen cases that of a woman.

In eight cases, Vermeer painted compositions of two figures with some pretense of anecdotal subject-matter. Again, a woman always occupies the centre of the little stage. She is writing or receiving a letter, with a maid in attendance (Beit and Jules Simon collections and Rijksmuseum); she is chatting, drinking wine, or discussing a piece of music with a cavalier (Frick collection and Berlin). These conversation pieces are well carried off. They are more studied than a good Metsu, less pointed than a good Terborch. There is a little sense of effort in most of them, and the eight two-figure compositions include only two undoubted masterpieces, the bizarre, yet wholly lovely, "Painter in His Studio," of the Czernin collection, Vienna, and the subtly complicated but very intimate "Music Lesson" at Windsor Castle.

Just three times Vermeer composed his anecdote with as many as three persons: "Christ with Mary and Martha" (Coats collection, Scotland); "Girl with Wine Glass," at Brunswick, and the "Music Lesson," at Fenway Court, the last formerly one of Thoré's pic-

tures. All of these are fine Vermeers, but not quite the best. There is one four-figure composition, the early and not wholly successful "The Courtesan," at Dresden. Five figures occur only in the homely idyl, "Diana and Her Nymphs," at The Hague, again an early and experimental piece.

Does not this rather dull census after all suggest a temperament? Contrast this thinly peopled, often solitary, woman's world of Vermeer with the drastic man's world of Terborch, the casual bustling world of Metsu, the swarming humorous world of Jan Steen. All that these contemporaries reckoned necessary in a picture—action, drama, crucial state of mind—Vermeer calmly ignored. His action is nil, the state of mind of his characters undramatic, habitual, almost bovine. Oddly, since his flavor is domestic, he never plays upon the obvious and always winning theme of motherhood. It was an advantage he willingly conceded to Metsu and Rembrandt.

Shall we then conclude with Mr. Hale that for the charm of a Vermeer we must look merely to its consummate technic? A little study of the four or five women who grace the finest pictures will suggest that we must rather look to some rare lyrical sentiment in the artist's

soul of which the technic, marvellous as it is, is merely a secondary evocation. Where else in Dutch art shall you find such women as Vermeer's—the "Milkmaid," stately as a Millet as she bends over the jug; the little "Lacemaker," daintily alert as her beautiful hands attack resolutely their difficult task; the "Lady at the Casement," quizzical, capable, with a peculiar sane sweetness; the plump creature of pearl-like blondness, radiant in azure and pale gold, who holds out a pearl necklace from a throat as lovely as the jewels; the candid, fearless young girl with a blue turban suddenly turning out of the picture, mouth half open at the wonder of a friendly world? To her even Mr. Hale has softened. Regarding her, he cites the "Mona Lisa," and the analogy, by which he signally fails to profit, might have suggested to him something peculiar in Vermeer's attitude toward women. He observed them not merely with a remarkable attention, but with a special tenderness and reverence. M. van Zype has aptly called Vermeer's emotional attitude chivalric, implying merely a respectful cult of womanhood and of beauty. It is just about the last sentiment one would expect to find in Holland of his time. Generally the Dutch masters treated

woman as a plaything or a mere utility. They did not contemplate her; she hardly seemed worth the pains, but they plainly stated her points, chiefly as regards bed and board. Under such sensual and utilitarian criteria, the poetry which art usually detects in womanhood vanishes. The Dutch artist often rather cynically pokes fun at his women—Terborch does so impliedly, Steen directly—or, after the fashion of Metsu, celebrates the paying housewifely activities. Vermeer does this, and much more. He invests his women, in whom we may surely recognize his wife and daughters, with glamour. In the clean, bright spaces of his home on the Old Long Dyke he contemplates the moral and physical beauty of those who have made that house a home. He finds beauty in all the household ritual, and when he seeks it farther afield, he often fails to find it. If ever a painter deserved to be called a feminist, it is Vermeer. He was, despite Mr. Hale, a painter of women, in his own fashion a precursor of Watteau and Gainsborough. It was easier to get women to pose? Possibly. Surely it was more delightful.

Jan Vermeer was also a most distinguished workman. Within his favorite scheme of

straw-yellow and blue, his planes of color are scrupulously accurate in atmospheric placing. Hals, had he given himself to work in little, might have shown an equal scrupulousness; no other Dutch artist did. Terborch effaces too much; Metsu lets his objects clash for lack of atmospheric subordination; De Hooch, with a wider range of color, sets himself a far simpler task. There never were more truthful interiors than those of Vermeer, and there never will be. The mere modulation of the apparently uniform tone of a wall, the sparkle of a gilt frame, the blue translucence of an open casement—of these effects, Vermeer is subtlest of masters. His modelling is highly simplified and discreet. Everything is kept rather flat, after a sort that at times will suggest the blander mode of Cézanne, and the form is suggested by the right distribution of large masses of light and dark and by the very accurate placing and texturing of the high lights. The textures are admirable, though never obtruded. Painting with a loaded brush, he yet keeps the surface relatively smooth. Within this smoothness are the most extraordinary modulations, so that a slight change of stroke or thickness will mean satin, fur, white porcelain, latten, or the Persian carpet which appears in so

many of the pictures. Such bread and fruit as he painted quite incidentally you will seek in vain until Chardin. His contours or edges are most carefully graduated to accord with the background.

In general, Vermeer eschewed the strong contrasts affected by his contemporaries. The blondness of his work gives it a very modern look, and in fact in its endeavor to cope with the actual effects of lighting without forced contrasts it is entirely modern in spirit. Certain eighteenth-century devices of heavy dotting or stippling, for coruscation—Guardi's habitual expedient—seem to have been first tried by Vermeer. You will find these loaded dots on almost any bit of still life, and particularly on the barges in the "View of Delft." This fine but perhaps overestimated picture, for its quality is of a sort become rather usual to-day, well illustrates Vermeer's love of harmonious tone and avoidance of crass contrasts. The salmon-pink strand of the foreground and the pale blue of the haven are so nearly of the same value that in a photograph the water-line is found with difficulty. No other Dutch artist would have dared set this bit of true observation against the notorious fact that land and water are very different elements. The

whole picture swims in air and diffused light. The red roofs glow between sky and water, as they do in nature, but with a depth no other Dutch painter has attained. The eye goes straight to the picturesque sky-line of the town by virtue of the right placing and value of everything. There is no resort to the common device, which Goyen and even Rembrandt employed, of artificially darkening the foreground to lead the eye into the artificially irradiated middle distance. The attraction of Vermeer's picture, a splendid experiment which apparently he did not repeat, lies less in any implication of sentiment than in a quiet candor, probity, and fidelity to actual appearances.

Vermeer's figure composition, on the contrary, is highly conventional, though the convention again is legitimately deduced from facts. He builds his pattern out of rectangles —tables, chairs, casements, frames, floor-tiles cunningly assembled, against which the human figure serves either as an axis or as a contrasting arabesque. Sometimes, as in the Dresden "Reader" and the "Studio," he hangs a curtain in the foreground, thus dividing the first plane into unequal rectangles. In the "Love Letter," at Amsterdam, he makes a *coulisse* of several such rectangular forms, cur-

tains and doors, and by displaying his scene far away in a tall slit, obtains an arresting, if rather sinister and uncharacteristic, effect. The convention is carried to the farthest point of refinement in the "Music Lesson," at Windsor. The tall rectangles of casements and picture and mirror frames contrast with the oblong of the virginals high up in the picture. The tessellated floor repeats the geometrical pattern in a transverse sense. The figures of a girl and her auditor are skilfully set to break the severity of the scheme. A 'cello and a heavy rug trailing over a table are contrasting elements. Everything gives a sense of quietude and harmony. The respectful attitude of the man is rare in Dutch art, and wholly typical of Vermeer. Sometimes, as in the Amsterdam "Reader," the rectangles overlap in interesting fashion, forming an elaborate fret. A more simple and normal use of this standard motive may be seen in the "Charming Lady at a Casement," in the Marquand Room of the Metropolitan Museum. A table and map cut the wall into a sideways T (⊢), which is filled by the double S curves formed by the woman's outstretched arms and shoulders. There could be no satisfactory way of establishing a pattern, and the whole thing,

with its lovely harmony of faintly shimmering blue and pale yellow, gives an early morning peaceful impression, as of a day happily and well begun. The "Studio," in the Czernin collection, which Mr. Hale regards as technically the finest Vermeer, shows a great variety of rectangles densely set about the map on the wall, with the figures arranged in piquant dissonantal relations to the general pattern.

Mr. Hale suggests that Vermeer may have drawn his rectangular-arabesque scheme from the study of Japanese paintings and prints. The coincidence is indeed interesting, but the Japanese did not systematically employ this system of space division until a half century or more after Vermeer's death. The scheme, after all, had become, as Doctor W. R. Valentiner has convincingly shown, almost an academic requirement in Holland by 1660. Terborch, Metsu, and De Hooch employ it, often felicitously; Vermeer simply adds to it variety and refinement.

With fewest exceptions, the cool light ripples through Vermeer's pictures from left to right. Generally the brush stroke follows the direction of the light, across and not with the forms. Such ability to secure the modelling by painting fearlessly down the light is, Mr. Hale

"The Music Lesson," by Vermeer.
In the Royal Collection, Windsor Castle, England.

justly observes, the surest mark of an accomplished luminist.

It would be easy and not unprofitable to carry the analysis of Vermeer's style much further, but it may all be read in Mr. Hale's elaborate and convincing chapters. I wish merely to remind the reader once more that this marvellous technic is not a thing in itself, the casual product of an uncommonly accurate eye and hand, but the means of expression of a rare sort of man who was much more than a painter—his homage to the daily beauty that his womankind brought into his home.

If I am right in seeing, with M. van Zype, a painter of feminist type in Vermeer, the reader already knows a good deal what sort of person the artist was. But the reader must divest from the idea of feminism certain morbid features which it has acquired in recent time, and think instead of a cult of woman inspired only by a normal sensuousness and by a fine chivalry. It is the gentleman's attitude to-day, and it was a pretty rare one in seventeenth-century Holland. Vermeer's refinement and idealizing tenderness must have come to him by nature, but they may well have been strengthened by gradual processes of educa-

tion which may be traced in his works, and confirmed by marrying young a woman whom he loved. We may fitly end where logically we might have begun, by seeking for Vermeer's artistic origins and inquiring what light they cast upon his personality.

To be sure, the contemporary poetaster, Arnold Bon, deploring the death of Karel Fabritius in a powder explosion, represents Vermeer as a phœnix, an *alter ego* of Karel, rising superbly from the powder reek, but this does not say that Vermeer was Fabritius's pupil. Still, modern criticism has grasped at the possibility of such a link between the mysterious and exquisite Fabritius and his younger friend, and by including the two in his great *Catalogue Raisonné* Hofstede de Groot has given great currency to what is rather an unlikely hypothesis. Many critics, following Thoré, assume that Vermeer developed under the influence of Rembrandt. Against this is the blondness of the work, its straightforwardness, and lack of fantastic quality. A more plausible theory is that he was the pupil of the accomplished chiaroscurist, Leonard Bramer, who had studied at Rome with the idyllic Elsheimer. In 1654, and later, during Vermeer's early membership in the Guild of St.

Luke, Bramer was head man, and presumably a leading spirit, in the small artist circle at Delft. An Italianate taste is betrayed in the pictures represented in Vermeer's interiors. A "Crucifixion," a "Last Judgment," a "Doubting Thomas," a "Finding of Moses," and a "Cupid" attest the master's admiration for the grand style. The occasional poor Vermeers—they are so disconcerting that John Van Dyke needlessly evokes a pseudo-Vermeer in explanation—I mean the two pictures in the National Gallery and the "Love Letter" at Amsterdam as types—these poorer Vermeers suggest that in his later years he, too, was yielding to the general Gallic sleekness of which the Mierises were the most offensive exponents. Throughout, he seems something of an eclectic. In what may well be his earliest pictures, "Christ with Mary and Martha," and "Diana and Her Nymphs," Vermeer is evidently composing his groups after the consecrated pyramidal formula invented in Italy.

The gravity of the New Testament scene is remarkable, the relief salient, but without giving much sense of air and space; the Martha pleading for the active life as she offers bread is a noble, amiable, and even pathetic figure; the pyramid made by the three forms is care-

fully established in three dimensions. At long range the picture might easily be taken for an exceptionally fine work of the Caracci school, and there we must seek its inspiration.

Still quite Italianate is the "Toilette of Diana." The five figures are disposed as an oblique pyramid. Primarily the picture is a study in delicate light and shade, the landscape being merely perfunctory. Five buxom Dutch girls are nearly dressed after their swim. One shows part of an exquisitely modelled back. One kneels and is drying the modestly exposed feet of the lass who is designated as the Sylvan Goddess only by the crescent in her filleted hair. What is impressive about this little pastoral is the ritual gravity of these wholesome young creatures in their trivial actions—the delightful unconsciousness of it all. Among the Dutch painters, only Rembrandt, in the "Finding of Moses," of the Johnson collection, has conceived anything at once so arcadian and so homely. There is an odd Correggian suggestion about Vermeer's group. Unquestionably he had studied classic Italian art both in engravings and in such derivative pictures as those of Rubens and Van Dyck. The travelled and cultured Leonard Bramer may well have inspired such studies. In fact,

there may have been a moment when young Vermeer, too, might easily have slipped into a hazardous cosmopolitanism. But his lucidity and intellectual independence were no less notable than his flexibility. For him experimentation afield was only the road to a finer native idiom.

In the big canvas, "The Procuress," dated 1656, he is plainly finding the way. It is a bordel picture, of the sort which Frans Hals had made staple at neighboring Haarlem. Four quite unconvincing revellers are seen at half-length behind a table, over which falls a fur wrap and an Eastern rug. At the right an eager, scarlet-coated gallant fondles a pretty wench from behind, thrusting a gold piece into her hand, which lies open on the table. Her face is untroubled, her air innocent, and while she receives the money, she carefully steadies a massive wine-glass with her other hand. At the right another long-haired celebrant grasps a glass, while clutching the neck of a 'cello, and grins rather aimlessly out of the picture. Between the two wastrels the shrewd face of a middle-aged procuress peers greedily at her ward. The color is a handsome if startling blare of scarlet, crimson, and yellow. The composition, the table occupying all the lower half of

the picture, making an odd formal arrangement, and the frame crowding the heads above, is unexpected, piquant, restless—everything that Vermeer in his maturity is not. The sense of space and quiet is absent. Throughout, the picture suffers from overemphasis. Vermeer brings to his uncongenial theme neither the moralistic unction of a Jan Steen nor the magnificent imperturbability of a Terborch. What is remarkable about the picture is the beautiful painting of the accessories and the endeavor to embody a thoroughly hackneyed matter in a novel and interesting composition.

At least it is the renunciation of the grand style. Mr. Hale thinks that the magisterial "Milkmaid" at Amsterdam may have followed this picture closely. Here the finished Vermeer is found. The serenity of his home, the charm of the serviceable women who kept it bright—here was the new and permanent vision. To the end of his short life Vermeer was to paint more like a dreamer and a lover than like a father and citizen. To lend truth and dignity to his dream he will spare no pains of acute observation and cunning craftsmanship. Is not this the very simple secret of Vermeer, most engaging of Dutch artists, consummate practitioner among artists of every time?

His home was full of music. Musical themes constitute the largest class of his works. Musical instruments are introduced into several others. His best pictures have something of the quality of a seventeenth-century motet. There is the same broad and generous harmony, those exquisitely balanced blues and yellows, in the details; something of the accurate, almost pedantic, construction of the whole in its calculated geometry. The glamour lies largely in this combination of breadth and spaciousness and lyrical sweep within a scrupulously formalistic framework. Such measured lyrism, with a tinge of preciosity, was a most characteristic artistic product of Vermeer's times—it is the specific note of contemporary French and English verse, and he himself is its most distinguished exponent in the art of painting.

VII

THE PAINTING OF SOROLLA

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The Sorolla exhibition held by the Hispanic Society in 1910 was a portentous success. Day after day thousands of people bustled each other through the narrow galleries. A mile of motor-cars slowly crept past the white building to take away exhausted and delighted visitors. It was as if New York had suddenly discovered art. As a permanent memorial of the exhibition, the Hispanic Society reprinted eight of the chief appreciations of this conquering painter of sunlight, adding also the tributes of the press, and what is more important a complete illustrated catalogue of the show.[1] This record of an unexampled popular and critical enthusiasm has evident documentary value. The future may take it very seriously as a literary and psychological curiosity. To the present writer it was a disconcerting chorus of praise for a kind of work that he

[1] *Eight Essays on Joaquín Sorolla y Bastida.* By Aureliano de Beruete, Camille Mauclair, Henri Rochefort, Leonard Williams, Elizabeth Luther Cary, James Gibbons Huneker, Christian Brinton, and William E. B. Starkweather. 2 vols. in 8vo. 350 cuts. New York: The Hispanic Society of America.

cannot believe has enduring stuff in it. One may agree with everything that is said about Sorolla's athleticism of the brush and ready command of the primary colors, one may accept his gusto without cavil, and yet question whether the zeal that took nearly 160,000 people to see his pictures had much to do with the more permanent qualities of art.

Since the critics in this volume have done full justice to his extraordinary powers, we feel the freer to point out his obvious limitations. A lack of reflective quality in his work has been generally admitted, but the implications of this criticism have not been fully drawn. Keen as is his vision and amazing as is his executive talent, they both have a kind of commonness. These canvases, upon which, in the words of his pupil, Mr. Starkweather, he has made "a furious assault" in the open air, are, to begin with, casually composed. Their pictorial arrangement is either *nil* or of the most obvious sort. A great relish has gone into them, but no thought and little selection. They are random sections of a vivid and continuous panorama. He sees much as the kodak or picnicking mankind see, and that is surely the ground of his enormous popularity.

What French critic it was that said, "Where there is no delicacy there is no art—*Où il n'y a pas de finesse, il n'y a pas d'art*"—I do not now recall, but I am sure that the saying is just, and that its application to the work of Sorolla will be something like a condemnation. But first I must apologize for using so old-fashioned and unpopular a word as delicacy in connection with art, or, rather, I must explain away the invidious associations of the word. The rude fret with which a rug-maker of the Caucasus adorns a border is also highly refined. With pious care the worker has tied thousands of knots under equal tension, has scrupulously followed the proper lines of the warp, has cautiously and with delicate urging pressed down successive rows of knots upon the solid pile, finally has clipped each tuft daintily that the fabric may lie even. Only through such thoughtfulness—such refinement of workmanship, let me insist—will the bold pattern come out with all the crispness of a design in mosaic. If any part of the process is shirked or abridged, the rug, for its barbaric color, may still delight a careless eye; but no collector will want it on his floor. So the early and apparently crude enamels of Limoges are really most delicate, the relation of exposed metal to vitreous color

being instinctively well calculated, and the broad masses of flaming enamel being adjusted to form a harmonious whole. So is the most casual scrawl of Daumier refined. Before moving the crayon he has been sure of the feeling and the stroke. The judgment may have been instantaneous, but it is a judgment and not a chance shot.

Because the work of Sorolla has almost nothing of this quality of judgment and reflection, it seems to me, in spite of its indisputable gusto and force, to take a rather low place as art. To the most obvious effects of motion, blazing sunlight, physiognomy even, he has willingly sacrificed all those delicacies of contour, texture, and rhythm which to a patient eye nature offers so royally. Or, rather, he has not sacrificed, could not sacrifice, what apparently he has not even seen. Four of his most admired pictures are at the Metropolitan Museum. One is a huddle of red oxen under the swelling sail of a stranded bark; another, three graceful girls poised in the iridescent whirl of a broken wave; still another shows a girl with her rosy form glowing under a diaphanous wet robe while a lad places the mantle about her shoulders; the last picture is of boys swimming frog-like in green water—a

technical triumph, for neither land nor sky is admitted to explain the subject. What of these pictures? Each and all they have the radiance of our badly tied rug. On inspection the impetuosity of the workmanship is seen to be coarse and obvious, the vision that of the camera, not of the sensitive eye. The beautiful form of the nearest girl in "The Bath, Javea," is marred by the rude strokes that are to mean reflected sunlight.

Generally speaking, this insistence on the bleak reflection of the sun is the painter's foible, and the formula of the yellowish splotch becomes as tiresome as that of the crimson shadow. In all four of these pictures the arrangement is casual, or rather wanting entirely. The lines of breakers in the background cut the charming group in "After the Bath" in a way to interrupt and impair the swing of the composition. "The Boys Swimming" is simply a brilliant sketch. The picture of oxen hauling up a boat, despite its heroic proportions, is a snapshot. It curiously lacks the dignity and vitality that would justify the scale. The brisk and efficient facture wholly lacks style. The picture gives a thrill, and one is content never to see it again. There never will be anything more in it than one has grasped

in the twinkling of a casual eye. To illustrate the possibility and value of style in such a subject, let me recall Besnard's famous canvas of two bay horses kicking off flies. Here we have the same scale and almost the same blond color scheme. But in Sorolla there is a dispersion of interest, while in Besnard there is a concentration of nervous energy that makes his restless beasts memorable and almost monumental. The Parisian has fundamental fineness of vision and a sense for economy of workmanship, while the Valencian has the genial, roving vision of every man, and either thinks not at all or paints faster than he thinks. "The Bath, Javea," comes very near to being a fine picture, and fails only for lack of thought. The vigorous swirl of the broken wave has none of the lovely quality of moving water. It is as untranslucent as a breadth of watered silk. The rocks, which might have lent stability to the motive, are realized neither in the energy of their forms nor in the interest of their textures. The delightful pictorial motive of the poised bodies of these children has been actually attenuated in the working out.

"But nobody paints sunlight like Sorolla," I hear a hundred devotees exclaim indignantly. This, I think, is a misconception. He

merely paints it big and paints it all the time. In actual coruscation I think Tarbell equals him; Besnard surely does. But it is time we got over the idea that it is necessarily a merit to make a picture look hot and blinding. Technically, such an accomplishment goes for what it is worth; pictorially, it may come to very little. I am somewhat of the late Burne-Jones's mind that such impressionists "don't make anything else but atmosphere—and I don't think that's enough; I don't think it's very much." My regret about Señor Sorolla is that, making cubic miles of atmosphere, he seems to me to make it speciously and badly. He knows shrewdly all the short cuts to expression. His methods are those of the scene-painter or the contriver of panoramas. But I am glad to take Sorolla's art quite on its own terms, and my regret is not that it is dazzling, but that to this minor quality have been sacrificed accuracy of atmospheric construction, fine linear quality, and general equilibrium.

Disequilibrium, in fact, is the especial characteristic of his art. Where there are several of his pictures present the eye does not rest so contentedly upon one that it is loath to leave, but moves rapidly from one to another. It is like looking out of so many windows, with no

reason for choosing any one. And here is not an embarrassment of riches, but simply the disorderly impression that nature makes before it has been sifted through an artist's temperament. The conditions of this painting preclude such sifting. The subject is chosen quickly and as swiftly executed. A few hours of intense labor in the open air and one of these big canvases is done. A despairing disciple is reported to have groaned: "He [Sorolla] paints as a cow eats." The compliment was perhaps excessive: a cow is a ruminant. Only by reflection does the artist impose fully upon outer appearances that inward harmony the possession of which is his title of nobility. If an artist has no fine individual forms and works on no instinctive geometry, then he is scarcely an artist at all, and his work, however brilliant in executive quality, becomes at bottom copyistic, purposeless, and, except as it may supply memoranda to a really creative spirit, null. When one has said that Sorolla's paintings are huge sketches one has admitted a great excellence of a small kind—their freshness and spontaneity, qualities once universal, and now rare only because painting has almost ceased to be a significant art; and one has equally denied to these brilliant improvisa-

tions all the more lasting and serious attributes.

"Why shouldn't a man make big sketches, since they evidently please him and delight us?" I hear the legion of enthusiasts that sought Sorolla at the confines of Manhattan protesting. There is, indeed, no reason why any one should not make any socially innocuous thing he likes to make, and sell it for what he can get. The reasons for not making big sketches which seem to be pictures, but are not, are not chiefly moral—though on that ground, too, something might be said—but æsthetic. John La Farge has somewhere stated the issue, and I paraphrase him freely from memory. The sketch is a mere transfer from reality, an episodical memorandum, an unrelated thing. We know it is a sketch from the fact that it has no bounds, but simply occurs upon the paper or canvas. If we frame it, that is a mere matter of convenience; it does not thereby become a picture. If, however, it is calculated with respect to bounds, the sheet of paper, a frame, then it is already a picture. And this is the meaning of Whistler's famous epigram that the fine work of art is finished as soon as it is begun. If what purports to be a picture is not calculated with regard to its

bounds, then, however robust the work or attractive the theme, it is a pretense. The maker has lightly usurped an alien glory the severe terms of which he has evaded. It is the absence of thoughtful arrangement and of real fineness of execution that makes me feel that the work of Sorolla is, in a sense, outside of art, as a certain kind of facile writing is outside of literature; of facile elocution, outside of oratory.

I could wish his method far finer, for then we should have had in his career a positive test of the value of the impressionistic attitude. As it is, his achievement, being far out of the common, is exemplary in this regard. As strenuous executant, always face to face with nature and resolutely minimizing the part of memory, that is, of accumulated individual intelligence, in his art, he has been the impressionist *à outrance* of our times. And over the Giverny school he has had the advantage of proceeding without theory or convention, as of dots, juxtaposed primary pigments, or the like. But, of course, impressionism has never rested on such formulas. It is not a procedure, but a theory of vision. The transaction by which an artist transcribes into his favorite medium the impression made by nature is re-

quired to be brief, concentrated, isolated from memory of similar transactions. Brief, because nature and the impressions she causes are constantly in flux; concentrated, because only so can the momentary impression be converted into the work of art; isolated, because otherwise the impression becomes contaminated with alien experiences. The true impressionist theoretically should have no intellectual or emotional stock in trade—merely the necessary executive habits.

Every transaction with nature is a new beginning, though it be the twentieth sketch of the same haystack or cathedral façade. The point is to see with the innocent eye, and not let your cerebral accumulations trouble either your naïve vision or your unhesitating hand. Such, in brief, is the impressionist gospel. Extraneous dogmas are the sanctity of sunlight and of atmosphere. The real point is always the inhibition and total distrust of memory. Paint always before the object; paint nothing that you cannot carry off in a single impulse—these are the main precepts. Forget all previous work, including your own, is the watchword.

It is inconceivable that a habit of work and vision demanding the severest concentration

and at least half-based on inhibitions—a most disciplinary regimen, in short—should have passed for a kind of slovenly insincerity. The fact that the drawing of Manet and the painting of Monet should have been accounted merely odd, showed how much the revolt was needed. The world was truly in a state deprecated centuries before in China by a painter who bewailed the fact that people wished to see his pictures with their ears. We needed a revolution of a violent kind to restore to the eye its simple rights as first counsellor for the graphic and plastic arts.

Yet it was a hasty and false conclusion that, because painters had misused their memories, that faculty must be suspended. Indeed, the most candid impressionists would admit that such abeyance of associations was psychologically impossible. The associations of any human experience may always rise out of latency—must do so, surely, when any habitual act is accomplished. The best we can do is to practise such concentration upon the impression of the moment that relatively the allied cerebral associations are mute. The kind of hypnosis really implied in the impressionistic attitude is impossible, or, if attainable, incompatible with the accomplishment of any con-

scious act whatsoever. Still, roughly speaking, a high degree of impressionistic abstraction is possible, and without it one cannot become an artist worthy of the name. At bottom, waiving mere studio recipes and themes which are more or less imposed by the spirit of the time, impressionism means, and, except in periods of decadence, always has meant, no more than simple loyalty to natural appearances. The arduous endeavor to make mere pigment cope with the complexity of the thing seen, the desire to make the necessary formulas correspond with reality, the renunciation of dull recipes, the purging of the eye as regards indolent, non-visual accumulations of the mind—this has been the straight and narrow way followed by every painter worthy of his salt. The luminists of to-day happen to bulk large and claim the honors of impressionism because they are innovators in the new themes of sunlight and atmosphere. They well deserve the credit that falls to all archaic craftsmanship, but so far as their temper and methods are not traditional they are mostly bad.

Since impressionism is merely realism taken in its true and not in its sordid sense, it represents a stage through which every artist not wholly fantastical must pass. To stay in the

impressionistic stage is wilfully to dwarf oneself; the only worse thing would be to leave it never to return. Through grappling with nature and life the personality is constantly enriched, and its spoils from experience are unconsciously transformed into patterns akin to the man himself. Memory is sifting and fining the mass, rejecting here, confirming there. After a time immediate visual experience becomes less valuable for its own sake, being in a manner repetition, than as a stimulus which concentrates this garnered experience upon a given occasion. Necessarily, the pouring of the visual wisdom of a lifetime into a pictorial composition is a rather delicate process and cannot be hurried. Here dispositions and abilities differ greatly, but, in general, one may say that we hardly know of any great work that has not been incubated deliberately. Misapprehensions have obscured this obvious truth. We talk as if Velasquez painted a masterpiece in a matter of a few hours. We forget that all his great compositions show numerous corrections, that the incredibly delicate texture of his flesh simply cannot be achieved in a single painting, and we forget also to reckon in his thinking before he set brush to canvas. Unquestionably, Monet's

Haystacks and Cathedrals and Water-Lilies are delightful things, and were painted as the impressionistic law demands, each picture in a few hours' time. But Monet had the steadying effect of a fixed scientific formula, and those enchanting pictures of the Thames which represent his apogee give every indication of being done slowly, thoughtfully, and largely in the studio.

In short, the wise artist learns to bring the whole man—and the most and better part of man is memory—to bear. Any other policy is as false economy as to paint with tied hands or wearing colored goggles. If the artist who has not grown out of impressionism into self-reliance falls short of the stature of a complete æsthetic personality, he who has or thinks he has outgrown the need of direct and tonic contact with nature is in peril of fatty degeneration. The ability to command at will the innocence of the eye is to success in art what the capacity to be as a little child is to perfection in Christian character. It is because Señor Sorolla has complacently remained at the stage of trilling scales and astounding arpeggios while the symphonies are waiting to be composed that I have to regard him as a virtuoso rather odd and diverting than really worth while.

"Why don't you out with it and say you don't like his painting?" The question is fair and wants a straight answer. I do like his painting. I get from it the keen thrill that a brass band or a deep baritone declaiming the "Holy City" never fails to produce in my eminently sympathetic sensorium. Such impressions have their value, but I do not need to seek them: they frequently come my way. That I have rarely heard quite so fine a polychromatic brass band as that of Señor Sorolla I gladly admit; but I still prefer the orchestra, or even a more tenuous music, that may hint at heights and depths within a life.

"At least he is a consummate technician." For twenty years I have been familiar with his work, and I cannot see in his bravura the signs of the finest execution. It is wonderfully telling, which is quite a different matter. Its emphasis is adjusted not to the fine, but to the ordinary eye. The structure of many of these pictures is as vague as their arrangement. A superficial and certainly skilful application of accents takes the place of real draftsmanship. Everything is a shimmer and an arabesque which have rather slight relations either with the character of the objects or with their atmospheric values. Here we must take issue

with most of the writers in the book of the exhibition. Sorolla has invented a brilliant shorthand which almost attains illusion, but his is emphatically not the vision nor the patience to seize those subtle variations of luminosity by which objects appear nearer or farther. To replace such study he has a whole bagful of vivacious expedients. What does it mean to a painter that many of the pictures and nearly all the sketches simply are disintegrated when transcribed in half-tone cuts of fair execution? Why, merely that the values are all false. A little clever handling of the edges of the planes, here and there a dash of inorganic red, or yellow, or blue—such arbitrary oppositions will to a careless eye give a sense of structure where it really is not.

It may seem that I have left rather little of what criticism has regarded as a first-rate talent, and that such isolated scepticism requires a fuller substantiation. Well, I have given my reasons, and some of the pictures are at the Metropolitan Museum and the Hispanic Society to prove me right or wrong. Furthermore, a good deal is left even with the proposed reservations, quite enough to account both for the critical and popular vogue of Sorolla. For the motion of things, the dynamic of wa-

ter, earth, and the figure, he has an extraordinary sense. His relish in the energy of appearances is his most winning quality, and were his vision finer and his hand more restrained, this quality might readily lift him to real greatness. As it is, he attains merely the *ad captandum* facility of certain orators and poets who manage to be uncommonly well adjusted to the common likings.

The joy of life and of the open is strong in the man. To him we owe rare glimpses of sun-soaked strands we should never otherwise see, of lithe wet figures glistening in the dazzling radiance, of proudly swelling sails saturated with sunshine. These are pleasant things, and for bringing them to our doors we are grateful to the Hispanic Society and to Señor Sorolla. But subjects and facility and bravura and naïve joy of life all pass, while art remains; and the artists who come to meet us we naturally love more dearly than those that require us to come, perhaps through difficulties, to them. The future historian of the psychology of the throng will marvel that a New York before whom Besnard and Zorn had been brought, which boasted, itself, an Alden Weir and a Childe Hassam, which knew the work of the consummate technician Tarbell, put

itself to sheer physical discomfort to get a passing glimpse of the paintings of Sorolla. Since the handsome volumes published by the Hispanic Society will explain the phenomenon only in part, I have been at the possibly unwarranted pains of writing these ungracious paragraphs for a future history of taste.

VIII

EUGÈNE CARRIÈRE

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Some painters, like Sir Joshua Reynolds, have formulated a theory of their art, only to ignore it in practice; others, like David and Manet, have held rigidly to a system, somewhat at the cost of their art. Those who have been theorists and have successfully applied their philosophy in pigment may be counted on the fingers of one hand. The late Eugène Carrière not only did this but also had the skill to put his philosophy into words. Hence M. Morice's book, which is based on the written and spoken words of his friend, affords a practically unique opportunity to study the inmost soul of a great artist. Criticism one must not expect. One has something better: the picture of a man and mind harmoniously devoted to an exceptional and highly personal form of pictorial expression.

"We must consent to life," was Carrière's favorite aphorism, and it conveys the spirit of his philosophy. We must make the most lavish expenditure of sympathy, seek the greatest number of contacts, welcome all sacri-

fices, bear all burdens, in order that we may experience the unity of the human lot, the intimate bonds between man and the inanimate universe, the interdependence of the present and the past. If the aim of life is universal sympathy, its goal is universal understanding, the recourse being always to what Pascal calls "the reason of the heart." Only through the perception of the infinitely numerous and subtle bonds that are gathered into each single human experience can we really hope to know any individual—or indeed ourselves. We must have felt with everything in order to interpret what lies nearest us. In brief, we must exercise to the utmost the sense of pity and altruism. "Let us restore to that beautiful word sentimentality," writes Carrière, "all its high and happy significance."

Since this chart of life seems to be the very contradiction of the dogma of art for art, it is instructive to note what close parallels it finds in the thinking of so avowed a Pyrrhonist as Walter Pater, of so metaphysical an æsthete as Lafcadio Hearn. In the remarkable epilogue to *The Renaissance* Pater has admirably set forth the notion of physical continuity:

"Far out on every side of us those elements

[that make up the body] are broadcast, driven in many currents; and birth and gesture and death and the springing of violets from the grave are but a few out of ten thousand resultant combinations. . . . This at least of flame-like our life has, that it is but the concurrence, renewed from moment to moment, of forces parting sooner or later on their ways."

But the process that to Pater seemed awful and impersonal—affording at best a few moments of sublime contemplation to an attentive spirit—seemed to Carrière instinct with possibilities of tenderness. It responds to our love and admiration. Our love completes and gives a kind of fixity to what would otherwise be a flux. "Tradition," he insists, "is merely the human form of nature." It is this fine and true phrase that brings his philosophy near Lafcadio Hearn's later speculation. Departing from the ghostliness of æsthetic enjoyment, the sense that it has all been experienced before, Hearn declares that such impressions are "the responses of innumerable dead to exterior influence—the weirdest resurrections of buried faculties." And again in a bolder sweep of affirmation he cries: "No thought can utterly perish. All life is force; the record of everything must pass into the infinite.

Now, what is this force that shapes and unshapes universes? Might it not be old thoughts and passions of men? The ancient East so declares."

To Hearn, again, these influences seemed to lie chiefly in the past and to partake of the inevitable. An infinitesimal responsibility each of us has to the moral cosmos, but hardly more than that. Carrière viewed the matter less passively. Pater's counsel to be a sensitive spectator of life he would have regarded as infamous. Hearn's more humane, if solitary, scepticism would have struck him as an unworthy refusal to accept life. His own maxims were of the most affirmative sort. Boethius's assertion—which was Plato's also—that love is the universal bond of things he would have highly approved, and its symbolic echo in the last line of the *Divine Comedy*:

Amor che fece il sol e l'altre stelle.

St. Francis's "Hymn to the Sun" is an even closer parallel. In fact, Carrière's fundamental maxims were highly practical and, though he was never formally a Christian, might be summed up in the Pauline metaphor: "Ye are members one of another."

Realizing the infinite complexity and extent of the human web, and desiring merely to illuminate certain typical portions of it, he naturally and wisely limited his subjects to the persons with whom his own *rapport* was close and intuitive—his own family and his intimate friends. More than half his work would fall under these rubrics. M. Morice declares that Carrière never painted a person he did not esteem, imputing a curious dignity even to his professional models. But we should misunderstand the attitude of the great intimist toward the portraits and the groups representing motherhood if we imagined they were merely so many records of isolated observation. Those two family groups in the Luxembourg are much more than the expression of a father's feeling for wife and children; such portraits as the "Edmond de Goncourt," the "Daudet," the "Rodin," are far more than so many pictorial souvenirs of so many friendships. Every picture of his is a groping after the universal experience that is symbolized in the individual; the best of the pictures are triumphant assertions of principles that hold for humanity at large. We know that he felt no individual life could be interpreted except by the perception of its bonds with all nature.

Conversely, we may believe that he came to clear understanding of these complex interrelations only through divining them at focus in the individuals he loved best; for Carrière, with all his passion for broad speculation, remained essentially the painter, and has assured us that in the case of the painter it is the "forms that suggest ideas." Every canvas, then, represents a double but a harmonious intention—an attempt to plumb an emotional abyss, a desire to present a thing seen refined of all accidents and raised to its highest reality. Accordingly, it would be impossible to find an artist of equal eminence to whom the mere pageantry of life, its grosser appearances, made so little appeal. In this fact lies the contrast between Carrière and the great predecessor with whom he had so much in common, Rembrandt. The fantastic vagaries, the love of masquerade, in the Dutchman would to the Parisian have seemed, if not a derogation, at least a waiver of the simplicity and directness of his art. They do indeed bespeak, if not a less single ideal, a lower degree of culture; and this is said with the purpose of discriminating solely and without seeking to draw a superficial Plutarchian parallel.

If one sought a quintessential word to con-

vey human compassion and sacrifice at their loftiest, if one were to choose a single experience to contain the idea of the persistence of life through love, that word and that experience would be motherhood. It was with a fine recognition of this truth that Latin Christianity soon added the figure of the Virgin, *Deipara*, to the masculine pantheon of Jewish Christianity. In a more universal, because a less theological, sense, Buddhism invoked a divine woman of pity, Kwannon. And one may say that the groups which Carrière painted of his wife and children, two of which are fortunately at the Luxembourg, have a significance hardly less universal. One feels of these children, enwrapped in one shadow with their mother, that they are truly flesh of her flesh, and that the bond has cost her and will cost infinite pains and apprehensions. One perceives, too, that this burden of the flesh and spirit is borne with a ferocious joy that again borders on the intolerable. We find in this quiet latter-day embodiment an allegory, to express which mediæval art had recourse to the crude symbolism of the pelican tearing her breast for the sustenance of her young. Maternity appears as a Promethean function, as if the gods pursued the giver of life with griev-

ous punishments: penalties accepted proudly, however, and even courted for their own sake. It is again a conception that the Middle Ages grasped feebly when they enumerated the seven joys against the seven woes of the Virgin. But we should note that in becoming more intimate and pathetic Carrière's reading of the theme has lost nothing of universality. Indeed, by hinting at the artificial pains and hazards of maternity in our day he has gained something in veraciousness, has made his symbolism more poignant.

Possibly this is his most valuable contribution to the subject-matter of art. The hieratic representations of motherhood have almost universally slurred or actually suppressed the anguish through which that dignity is won. It costs the Venus Genetrix no more to increase her happy progeny than it did of old time to free herself from the foam. Carrière, who has written a fine page on this classical symbol of fecundity, appreciated its splendid naturalism, but found it inapplicable to his own times. He might have noted the same titanesque qualities in the Christian Madonnas almost without exception, or, better yet, in that Buddhist goddess who radiantly gives birth to the divine child in the clouds. But

"Maternité," by Carrière.

to accept these blither forms of the theme would have been to falsify the complexity of the relation as he observed it in the mother of his children. He had to do with an eternal principle of fealty to the race asserted in the face of physical and social conditions that make such loyalty doubly perilous and fraught with sacrifice. Since it is unlikely that modern womanhood in the so-called privileged classes can ever regain the healthy animalism of old time, it is likely that Carrière's type will be not merely documentary for our age but also valid for the remoter future.

If the "Maternities" of Carrière all express the symbolic, nay, the sacramental nature of that high sacrifice of the individual to the race, it is true only in a lower degree that his portraits, too, are all generalized types—and this without ceasing to be likenesses. In each face he read what was true for kindred human experiences. Thus in the "Edmond de Goncourt" there is a striking irradiation of that sensuous fastidiousness and hauteur which might be predicated of every dilettante from Sardanapalus down. The "Alphonse Daudet" breathes the eternal boyishness, the cultivated whimsicality, that characterizes all minor and highly self-conscious manifestations of literary

genius. It smiles sadly and understandingly at the "Erasmus" of Holbein; it would grace an edition of Ronsard. The "Rodin" again is the type of that leonine melancholy, that essential simplicity and energy that has marked the greater geniuses of the creative sort. Carrière's portraits of himself typify rather the self-contained enthusiasm of the seer. It is a face that, grown old, would strangely resemble Donatello's eternally vivid mask of Marsilio Ficino the Platonist. In every case we have an attempt of the mind to assert what is permanent in that ephemeral association of forces which we call a personality. One might even say that Carrière and Rodin alike, both believers in the principle of correspondences, both convinced that the artist's vision has a higher reality and validity than the so-called facts of observation, deal in a sort of visual Hegelianism, but the phrase would imply a greater doctrinarianism than I intend. In any case it is instructive to note that two great artists, professing an identical æsthetic, have arrived at a product so essentially different. You will nowhere find in Carrière the morbid profundities of Rodin—the Dantesque preoccupation with the nether depths of evil; and you will find the tenderness of Carrière only episodically

in the work of Rodin. In artistic creation temperament is, after all, the master—an Ariel to which mind is a more or less serviceable Caliban.

Certain readers may take it amiss that I have said so much about a remarkable life without furnishing a single biographical fact, and more, perhaps, will deplore the literary infatuation that can perpetrate so many words about a great technician without rising to the drawing-master's point of view. In apology, I can only say that aside from Carrière's art there is practically nothing to say. When we have noted that he was born in 1849, at Gournay, and studied at the Academy of Strasburg; in obedience to his father, tried to be a manufacturer, but had to give it up; entered Cabanel's atelier in 1869, only to enlist in the army of defence and be taken prisoner; married in 1877; gradually struggled toward the success he began to attain by 1882, and suffered heroically from cancer until, after two years, death released him in March, 1906—when we have said this, his formal biography is complete. No man ever lived more thoroughly the inner life, and whatever is valuable in that intimate record is in his pictures. We may infer his relation with his wife and his six

children in a whole series of beautiful works; the story of the critics, his friends, who encouraged him in the obscure years—Marx, Morice, above all Geoffroy, appears in the portraits, and the same roll avows his admirations—Rodin, Anatole France, Daudet, Puvis, Verlaine, Metchnikoff. What does it profit us, then, to recall that in 1879 he exhibited his first picture at the Salon and became the object of polemics, that the same year he happily failed to carry off the Prix de Rome, that in 1881 he won his first medal, that from the next year the state began to buy his works, until, in 1889, he received a medal of honor and the ribbon of the Legion, and therewith the guinea stamp for his work? That year a well-meaning acquaintance remarked that to "arrive" at forty was, after all, doing better than the average, to which Carrière smilingly rejoined: "I don't compete with it!" So much biographical small change I concede grudgingly to those who want it.

For declining to ascend prematurely the high seat of the drawing-master, my excuse is similar. Carrière himself perversely chose to give precedence to precisely such general considerations as have detained us. He was more concerned with his attitude toward life than

with his manipulation of the brush. Indeed, on the matter of his peculiar craftsmanship, he is reticent. One may gather only by hints what he intended by his notably evasive manner, and his critics have given rein to esoteric and not very happy interpretations of the mist that envelops his strongly asserted forms. In fact, this fog has bothered everybody. It was the subject of easy ridicule and malicious legend. It used to be whispered about the ateliers of Paris that he got it by observing his subjects through skilfully chosen veils. Some tried this simple recipe, but nobody got the effect. M. Morice regards this twilight as an arcanum—"in which the magnetic waves from which and through which human beings are evolved may be perceived. Carrière defines them in an atmosphere that keeps their universal relations intact." Mr. Arthur Symons, in his essay on "Nineteenth Century Painting," takes much the same view, writing: "Carrière evokes a mist or twilight which clothes his humanity with that tenderness that lurks transformingly behind our eyes when we look at one another, not in observation (which is science), but in love (which is the beginning of art)." Of the two, Mr. Symons's explanation is the clearer and more suggestive of the

creative act, but either commentary is perilously remote from the simple appearance, which we shall do well to consider at last under the dry light that the drawing-master affords.

Considered merely as so much workmanship, a painting of Carrière is a brusque, powerful, and structural drawing, with infinite superadded strokes—true caresses of the brush, which at once express the main tensions of skin and muscle over bone, impart a uniform feeling—asserting the dominant mood of the individual—and also bind the object to the enveloping brown atmosphere. The pregnancy of this method, the extraordinary manner in which the palpable form advances and recedes in the obscurity, is based on a learned apprehension of the actual bulk and dimensions of the object. One cannot observe the delightful bits of still life that adorn the interiors of Carrière without perceiving that he understands form in the severe and classical sense. Indeed, one may say that all the artists who have successfully delineated, not in lines or conventional chiaroscuro, but in atmospheric planes, adopting all the short cuts of the human eye itself, have first mastered the analytical method. One need only recall the early

painting of Rembrandt or Velasquez. The failure to achieve this pedantic but necessary certitude is what vitiates the fascinating art of Monet and marks the inferiority of the "Intimists" who have tried to follow in Carrière's footsteps. His own hand plays so freely with the modelling, suppressing in the main, exaggerating fearlessly at will, because the brush never loses its touch with the underlying form.

Taking this method now from the onlooker's point of view, we begin to get the meaning of the much-debated mist. Whatever it is or is not, it is surely an attenuating of the gaunt and perhaps intolerably poignant first painting that lies beneath. The "Maternities," the portraits, are in their inception of an emotional appeal that exceeds the bounds of discretion. Carried to completion by the so-called realistic methods, the appeal would be unreasonable, the effect would approach caricature of the sentimental order. The mist, then, whatever may be its more recondite function—and I doubt if it has one—represents the sort of reserve that the true poet or the fine orator interposes between himself and the public when the emotion veers toward the painful. In pity for us Carrière will give us only so much of his affec-

tions as we may properly share, and his method of painting makes that share a shifting one, according to the capacity of the seeing eye. For the mist is variously penetrable, both as regards the form and the emotion it enfolds.

So far we have regarded Carrière's favorite twilight as chiefly negative—a veil for what would otherwise be too cruelly exposed. It is, of course, more than that. It permits a swift and highly intense execution in which the representation of form and the rendering of emotion proceed as by a single process. I do not mean to suggest that a fine painting at any stage is coldly put together, but it is clear that by the ordinary methods of analytical draftsmanship and successive repaintings much of the work is relatively inert, making not for the general impression but for the mere recording of the form. A great painter will preserve the primal emotion through all these mechanical stages; a highly sensitive genius will gladly abridge them, and, as a matter of fact, we find practically all the keenly interpretative painters passing rapidly from the slower to the swifter methods. In a painting by Carrière one may safely say there was no inert or merely mechanical stage—no suspension of the first enthusiasm. As he drew the

harsh fundamental image, itself highly expressive, into more suave and complicated forms, every flick of the brush served a double purpose. It asserted a marked physical trait selected from many only because it implied something in character. Only by this swift and intense method could that admirable portrait of Verlaine have been done in a single morning while the "Sitter" took his holiday from hospital by strolling and chattering incessantly about the atelier. If anybody would understand the difference between expressive draftsmanship and mere competent rendering of form let him take the poorest cut of the Verlaine into the Taylorian Institution, Oxford, and compare the print with the clever portraits that Professor Herkomer also did each in a half-day for the edification of artistic Oxford.

To have done with this famous mist, it seems to need no more recondite explanation than that given above, being the predestined vehicle for Carrière's tense and intuitive emotionalism. Indeed, it is hard to see either how he could have expressed himself in any other way or why any one else should presume to borrow so idiosyncratic a mode of expression. From the point of view of simple craftsman-

ship it marked an effort toward economy of means. Lafcadio Hearn dreamed of a similar prose style. "My own hope," he wrote to Miss Bisland, "is to do something in accordance with this idea: no descriptions, no preliminaries, no explanations—nothing but the feeling itself at highest intensity. I may fail utterly; but I think I have divined a truth which will yet be recognized by stronger minds than mine. The less material the more force:—the subtler the power the greater, as water than land, as wind than water, as mind than wind." Then, with a curious echo of Carrière's theory of correspondences, he adds: "I would like to say something about light, heat, electricity, rates of ether vibration—but the notion will work itself out in your own beautiful mind without any clumsy attempts of mine to illustrate."

It would be pleasant and perhaps wise to take leave of Carrière with these illuminating words of an artist in letters. But M. Morice makes one or two claims for his hero which we should still scrutinize, and there are withal one or two pregnant sayings of Carrière that I would not willingly omit. When M. Morice declares that Carrière was not only a great colorist but also a great decorator he strains sorely

the accepted meaning of these words. When he writes that "the grand harmonic lines and magnetic vibrations of these paintings are arbitrarily interrupted by the brutal presence of the frame, and would find their true melodic (?) continuation, their natural outlet, in the architectural lines of building as in the logical movement of crowds and the open air," he comes pretty near to writing nonsense. We read of the Chinese painter who walked into his own screen and disappeared forever, but it never yet was a decorative merit for any picture to strain at its established bounds, or to present itself as a thoroughfare either for architectural lines or for human beings in throngs. Indeed, the intimate sentiment and the vaporous method of Carrière seem to preclude excellence in the monumental style. This mist pretty well disguises that large and simple balance of line and mass which is the very essence of good mural painting. For that matter Carrière's twelve panels of the Sciences in the Hôtel de Ville would convince any unprejudiced observer that here was unrealized intention and mediocre decoration—a whisper where the full voice was emphatically required.

To say that Carrière was a great colorist is merely to abuse the word great. An exqui-

site colorist he undoubtedly was, obtaining every loveliness of tint that his convention permitted. And his manner invited beautiful opalescences where the light falls upon the flesh, and permitted occasionally the contrast of a dull red or green garment seen in the brown air. But, generally speaking, color in Carrière is a thin and subtile accompaniment played about a melody—to admit M. Morice's word—conceived in monochrome. I hope not to be suspected of confusing mere polychromy with splendid coloring when I say that we can properly speak of a man as a great colorist only when he employs something like the whole scale, and compels a harmony out of the extremes of the palette. We need not say that a man who has limited his palette or even renounced color entirely is thereby less an artist. There are fortunately many kinds of excellence. But we merely darken counsel when we insist that a man who has subordinated color to tone or mood is nevertheless a great colorist. To illustrate—Titian, Giorgione, Veronese, Rubens, Claude, Vermeer, Watteau, Tiepolo, Turner, Renoir, these may, it seems to me, fairly be called great as colorists. Velasquez is great at times in this regard and could have been anything he wished, but since

his conception of character led him progressively to the subordination of color to tone and atmospheric effect, we may more accurately call him a fine than a great colorist. Rembrandt, I feel, belongs also to this category; in fact, one can hardly conceive any supremacy in painting as such without the color sense fully developed. On the other hand, we must judge artists by what they elect to be, not by our estimate of their latent powers. We only mess matters when we call Chopin a sublime composer for the orchestra, because he is lord of the pianoforte. In fact when we ignore the renunciations that an artist imposes upon himself we go far toward effacing all distinctions and proclaiming the nullity of criticism itself.

But I have dwelt too long upon these exceptional vagaries of Carrière's friend and eulogist. There remains the more rewarding task of putting together three or four sayings of the artist that show unmistakably his attitude toward his work. For its vitality we have the bold metaphor: "The body is a repoussé, not a cast." It is, in other words, not a mere surface to be explored and coldly represented, but something thrust out into space and there maintained by the pulsating forces within. The

element of sacrifice and artful exaggeration in his method is explained in the distinction he draws between "the figure presented in its ensemble, containing the details, and the figure devoured by the details and losing the unity of its essential form." We have seen that he regarded every work of his as a symbol of manifold relations, as a type of all kindred things. This thought finds expression in a simile devoted to the sculpture of Rodin, but equally true of his own painting: "So the earth projects from its surface visible forms, images, statues which fill us with a sense of its inner life." We are to read, that is, the fragmentary evidence we have in a marble of Rodin or a canvas of Carrière much as the geologist reads the vicissitudes of the earth on an exposed ledge or broken-down river terrace. It is an art, in fine, that asks co-operation of the seer. To an inattentive mind it can reveal little.

Carrière is still so near us that it would be vain to inquire as to his ultimate place in the history of art. Indeed such class lists are rarely quite worth the pains. It is enough for us to recall that he pursued a narrow vein with singular tenacity and insight. His painting must be measured not by its extent but by its depth.

He has contributed a peculiar nervous tension to portraiture which, whether of enduring value or not, is highly characteristic of our age. He has given the eternal theme of motherhood a new poignancy. In the striving of his brush toward that manifold suggestiveness which is the peculiar function of poetry he is again eminently of our times, and in this *Andersstreben* he is something more or less than French. Clarity, a sense of limits, has been the ruling trait of French painting from the first. One may observe it in fourteenth-century missals and in the latest work of Degas. In the attempt to freight a canvas with a general theory of life Carrière approaches the German mood or the English. Seeking "something far more deeply interfused," he transcends in a manner the bounds of his craft, and takes his place beside such symbolists as Blake or Watts. It was an emprise that would have been disastrous in one without the craftsman's conscience, and it was the vivid sense of scientific reality and the joy in the manipulation of the brush that kept Carrière upright in a path where hundreds have fallen. The future historian, while citing him as a glory of the French school at the end of the nineteenth century, will hardly fail to note what an isolated apparition he was—

as exceptional in that Paris from which he drew so electric a sense of life, as exceptional if not as portentous as Rembrandt was in Holland, as Velasquez in Spain.

IX

WATTS AND HIS ART

WATTS AND HIS ART

Toward the art of Watts it is difficult for me to maintain anything like critical detachment. My mind goes back too vividly to that winter of the New York exhibition of 1884, when, as a lad, I first caught the truth that great painting may arouse and calm one as great poetry does or noble music. After more than thirty years I still recall the fragile form of "Life" heartened to the next hesitant step upward by the strong hand of "Love," and "Love" himself with wings broken against a door into which "Death" must pass. I retain, too, a general sense of grave, shrewd, and magnanimous faces set between the larger canvases. The "Matthew Arnold" is still clear to me, and the massive head of that great Christian warrior, "Lawrence of India." Eight years later it was my privilege to confirm these admirations by a visit to the studio in Melbury Road. Even since, the question of Watts's symbolism, its legitimacy and its limits, has been occasionally present to me. It is, naturally, the central critical issue, and the answers are confus-

ingly various. Among English artists and men of letters it is common enough to hear Watts spoken of as an admirable landscapist and portrait-painter, unhappily warped by a fad for allegory. Others laud the elevation and copiousness of his invention while regretting the inadequacy of his technic. Some count him the greatest technician of the century, while more or less averse from his transcendental themes.

Such wide differences of intelligent opinion show how exceptional was the man's genius. He recked little of our artistic standards; he escapes our categories; he seems irreducibly the individualist, yet an individualist with a baffling difference, for there never was a soul more socially minded than Watts. Nations were his beneficiaries—France, Canada, Australia, the United States, above all his own England, which now by gift or bequest possesses the bulk of his work. To do public decoration for the actual cost was almost habitual with him. He put away wealth in the desire to serve his times and posterity. His very looks and habits suggested oddly a reincarnation of the older artists he adored. His resemblance to the aged Titian was striking, and he followed Titian's way of painting slowly upon

many canvases, gradually perfecting them through years. The forms of the mountain chains, made up of prone titans, in the design for "Chaos," he took from the stains on a crumbling plaster wall. It was one of Leonardo da Vinci's devices for stimulating invention. Watts's habit of painting from small modelled figures had earlier been Tintoretto's. Thus in all respects he seems an anachronism in London of the nineteenth century, and his own requirement that a painter must be of his times seems ironic. Yet in the childlike seriousness and persistency of the man was no taint of irony. He was, I believe, not merely one of the greatest artists of his time, but in all essentials one of the most representative. If he differs from most successful painters of his day, it is precisely because they represent next to nothing—individual caprice, trick of trade, flutter of the market—whereas he represents almost alone among painters the deeper currents of life and thought that mark the Victorian age. In gratitude for the first great impression of art I ever received, let me now endeavor to analyze his genius.

My task is the easier that Watts's purpose was single and fully expressed not merely in

his pictures, but also in his letters, recorded talk, and published writings. The difficulty, indeed, is the excess of material. Shortly after his death a neighbor, Mrs. Barrington, published a bulky and formless *Life*. Now Mrs. Watts exceeds the standard measure of two volumes by adding an entire volume of her late husband's literary works. The tone of her biography is excellent; she preserves many sayings that one would be sorry to miss; she gives the general sense of that purposeful yet carefully sheltered life, of the coming and going of grave men and fair women, of an atmosphere of cheerful reverence and love. And yet the picture is sadly obscured by the details. Nor can Watts himself be said to be interesting through so many pages. Could the Prophet Isaiah himself bear expansion to three-volume scale? In the considerable task of sifting much ill-assorted material, I shall be helped by Robert de la Sizéranne, who has admirably analyzed the art, and by G. K. Chesterton, whose little biography leaves nothing to add on the topic of Watts as a representative Victorian.

What is remarkable about Watts is his absolutely dedicated life. Had he deliberately intended to make himself a great painter, he would have held no other course. Of poor par-

ents and barely educated in his youth, he was grounded at least in his Bible, his Homer, and his Scott, and he soon undertook the hard task of teaching himself French, Italian, and Greek, and the easier task of teaching himself how to draw and paint. His earliest drawing, probably of his seventh year, is a "Sisyphus"—a universal type. Before he was sixteen he was taking commissions for chalk and pencil portraits, and was self-supporting. At eighteen, in 1835, he was admitted to the Antique School of the Academy. The keeper, William Hilton, admired his work and besought him to abstain from imaginative composition during his schooling—advice which young Watts calmly disregarded. In his twentieth year, 1837, he exhibited two portraits at the Academy, and one masterly composition, the "Wounded Heron." The portrait of his father, done two years earlier, is more thinly painted, but has the wistful candor of a Gilbert Stuart. It suggests the gentle spirit of the humble musician baffled by the world, sympathetic guardian of a motherless boy of genius. For a few years young Watts, hampered by the prostrating headaches which pursued him through life, worked chiefly as a portrait-painter, gradually emerging from the world of Dickens to that, by anticipation,

of Mrs. Humphry Ward. And then came the success that made him a great artist. In a laudable but abortive effort to encourage mural painting, looking to the new Parliament House, the government, in 1842, instituted a competition of cartoons on subjects in English history or literature. One hundred and forty designs were submitted, and young Watts, with Cope and Edward Armitage, received one of the three first awards of three hundred pounds sterling. "Caractacus Led in Triumph through the Streets of Rome" was the subject, and from the existing fragments it is clear that Watts had already saturated himself with the grandeur of the Parthenon marbles and of Titian.

With his cartoon money he went to Italy. At Florence he became a casual guest of Lord Holland, minister to the Tuscan grand duchy. The beauty and gentleness of the young man appealed to those fine amateurs Lord and Lady Holland, and he remained their guest for the four Italian years. This meant a spacious life, now in the Palazzo Feroni, now at the Medici villa of Careggi, now at Naples; it meant, too, the very best society the world afforded. Watts became the friend of the brilliant Duff-Gordons; Ristori sat to him, and Verdi and Princess Mathilde Bonaparte. There was

space and leisure for great canvases. Italian history and legend supplied the themes—Buondelmonte, Paolo and Francesca, Fata Morgana, Boccaccio's story-tellers. In the Casa Feroni and at Careggi he made his first attempts at fresco. Rome supplied the great sensation of the Sistine Chapel. With the Parthenon marbles it was henceforth ever present to him as the test of the elevation of his own work. Michelangelo's influence is plain in the historical painting, completed in 1846 for a new government competition, and later bought by the nation, "Alfred Inciting the Saxons to Resist the Danes by Sea"; but in the main the leading influence in the early as in the later painting is that of the Venetians. The same year Watts begged the Greek merchant Constantine Ionides to commission him "to paint a picture to send to Greece. Some patriotic subject, something that shall carry a moral lesson." The publicist is making himself felt in the detached artist. In a letter he describes his "Alfred" as "dedicated to patriotism and posterity." In every way the idyllic guest-friendship with the Hollands was fruitful. Young Watts, like Delacroix, had definitely rooted his art in that of the High Renaissance. Moreover, it seemed as if he were to realize the pre-

cepts of Sir Joshua and the ambitions of the unhappy Haydon in founding an historical school of painting. For such work the monumental gravity of the "Caractacus" cartoon and the fire of the "Alfred" show that he had every qualification, and his increasing devotion to symbolism bears a little the look of thwarted development—a question that must later occupy us.

Meanwhile it is interesting to note how circumstance plays into the hands of a steadfast purpose. For three years after he left the Hollands in Florence, until 1850, Watts, in invalid fashion, fought it out alone in London. Then Mr. and Mrs. Thoby Prinsep took him in at Little Holland House, near his old patrons, and Signor, as they called him, was resident elder brother to that charming family for more than thirty years, inheriting, when the Prinseps moved out, their excellent housekeeper. And when Little Holland House was replaced by its namesake in Melbury Road, the master, in his old age, was cherished first by an adopted daughter, then by the young wife who is now his biographer. His homes at London and at the Surrey studio, Limnerslease, became places of pilgrimage for wise, good, and merry people. The very hack work of portraiture seldom

brought to him a person he did not value, and led to him many of the fairest women and ablest men of his time. And this necessary toil was much lessened through the faith of a constant patron, Mr. Charles H. Rickards, of Manchester, whose collection became the nucleus of those exhibitions that in the eighties brought the master tardy fame. Thus he painted much on his own terms, as a postscript to Gladstone concerning a sitting will suggest. It reads: "Not a word to be spoken from the beginning to the end." In every way he was spared for his work. To have married in middle life so alien a genius as that of the brilliant girl Ellen Terry would have fatally disoriented many a transcendentalist; but the mismated stars were well out of the coil after a twelvemonth, and he planning a new venture in colossal statuary. In 1867, at fifty, he was made an academician. Twice he declined a baronetcy at Gladstone's hands. And when he died, at the age of eighty-seven, in 1904, he was generally regarded as England's foremost artist. The colossal equestrian group, "Physical Energy," which had been the chief concern of his later years, was cast by the state for London, and a replica set up as a memorial to Cecil Rhodes on the Matoppo Hills.

From his seclusion Watts maintained a singularly magnanimous public spirit. Besides the great series of portraits and poetical pieces which he reserved for the nation, he gave away scores of his best pictures to public galleries, offered to fresco Euston Station for the costs, volunteered as a rifleman, established a private memorial to the obscurely heroic, wrote on the imperial destinies of England, instructed the villagers near Limnerslease in arts and crafts, gave his tithe to Ruskin's ill-fated St. George's Guild—in general, showed himself the most socially minded of men, yet keeping these activities strictly in line with his career as an artist. Day by day throughout his life he rose at daybreak, grudging the necessary hours of sleep. Almost alone among modern painters, he studied with utmost care color and vehicles with regard to their permanency. Every great composition was repeatedly amended and frequently put through several versions. So the long and stainless life was rounded out in gentle persistency, in kindliness, in high endeavor, and in a strange imperturbability.

Rossetti once, in a rare moment of affluence, hired a hansom and took young Burne-Jones

to Little Holland House to see a painter who "paints a queer sort of pictures about God and creation." The casual phrase still pretty well describes the attitude of the ordinary person toward Watts's symbolistic compositions. Our immediate concern is to ask why Watts quit history for his symbols. In the first place his historical compositions had been very much a by-product of successful competitions. The pictures represented opportunities which chanced never to recur. Then it is likely that he may already have had misgivings as to the validity of the *genre*. In his later years he used to insist that the only truthful historical art was portraiture. As early as 1848 he entertained the scheme of forming a gallery of portraits of his great contemporaries—a purpose inflexibly maintained for more than fifty years. Aside from this new and absorbing emprise the turnover into symbolism seems to me a natural expression of a soul profoundly religious yet discontented with outworn forms of Christian mythology. Watts's task was to ascertain the essential ideals of a holy life, and to find human forms that might fitly impersonate these ideals. In the first quest, he often admitted himself, he invented nothing, for "Love and Death," and "Life and Hope," and "Greed

and Time," and "Hate and Valor" are always present to every thinking soul. In the second quest, that of finding human symbols for these great forces, he had the guidance of Pheidias and Titian, and, of course, many accepted types lay ready in classical and Biblical legend; but the achievement of fitting the residual faith of his age with appropriate symbols must count among the supreme efforts of creative imagination. For there is nothing cold about the mythology of Watts. His heroic forms are the very antipodes of those sleek transcriptions from the model which grace so many public halls in France and America. They are warm with life, portentous with meaning. It is easy to hate them, and a certain kind of realist or impressionist is probably bound to hate them. It is easy to mock at them, but impossible to forget them. They are as personal as a vision of Giorgione or Blake, and no artist ever needed less a signature. The double process of framing a kind of theology and inventing its symbols is, so far as I know, unique in the history of art. Blake, no doubt, is the nearest parallel, and to him was denied the discipline of monumentality.

Whether my explanation of Watts's symbolistic trend convinces or not, at least the stages

of the development may quite accurately be traced. In 1848, the year of revolutions, he planned a comprehensive scheme of decoration to be called "The House of Life"—a project so significant of his way of thinking that we must linger over it. Very interesting is the constant mixture of history and symbolism, and especially significant the way in which forces, ideals, and abstractions assume human form. This is the true mythological temper. Watts's memorandum runs:

The ceiling to be covered with the uniform blue of space, on which should be painted the Sun, the Earth, and the Moon, as it is by their several revolutions and dependence upon each other that we have a distinct notion of and are able to measure and estimate the magnitude of Time. The progress of Time and its consequent effect I would illustrate for the purpose of conveying a moral lesson—the design of Time and Oblivion would be exactly in its place. To complete the design, the Earth should be attended by two figures symbolic of the antagonistic forces, Attraction and Repulsion. I would then give, perhaps, upon one-half of the ceiling, which might be divided with a gold band on which the Zodiac might be painted, a nearer view of Earth, and by a number of gigantic figures stretched out at full length to represent a range of mountains, typifying the rocky structure or skeleton. These I would make very grand and impressive, in order to emphasize the insignificance of man. The most important (to us) of the constellations should shine out of the deep ultramarine firmament. Silence and mighty repose should be stamped upon the

character and disposition of the giants, and revolving centuries and cycles should glide, personified by female figures of great beauty, beneath the crags upon which the mighty forms should lie, to indicate (as compared with the effect upon man and his works) the non-effect of time upon them.

Then I would begin with man himself, trace him through his moral and political life; first the hunter stage. . . . Next the pastoral state. . . . This is the Golden Age, the age of poetry. . . . There would be a great chance of exquisite subjects to illustrate this epoch, and here might be introduced the episode of Job.

Next should be man—the tyrant—the insidious oppressor—the slave, a dweller in cities—the Egyptians raise the pyramids, etc.

Here the manuscript becomes discontinuous, but there seems to have been intended a pageant of the progress of civilization, through the ages, to the preaching of Peter the Hermit. All along would have been depicted, with the mythology of each people, those heroes whom he regarded as most instrumental in the spiritual advancement of the race. Watts later remarked that "with certain material advantages, which would have caused me by their nature to weld my thoughts into a regular form, I think my efforts might have been given place as an epic." The observation shows a curious lack of understanding of what an epic is. Yet I think the mood sceptical will in a fair-minded person yield to the conviction that, given the

"material advantages," Watts would have produced, not the epic, but a decorative sequence which might fully have realized his ambition "to do for modern thought what Michelangelo did for theological thought."

One's confidence in his power to execute so grandiose a scheme must rest upon the great fresco of "Justice" which he executed between 1852 and 1859 for the chapel of Lincoln's Inn. Many interruptions, including an archæological trip through the Greek Islands to the site of the Mausoleum, delayed the work. In the swift and nervous transfer of his designs to the wet plaster he found the chanting of the choristers an inspiration and solace. Always he loved to parallel his art with music, endeavored himself to master the violin, even dreamed occasionally of composing solemn anthems. The "Justice," with its half-circle of great lawgivers, is, everything considered, the finest true fresco executed since the Renaissance. It grows, as such compositions inevitably must, out of Raphael's "Disputa" and "School of Athens," but it has fuller and more satisfactory color. Unlike these hemicycle compositions as a class, it is warm and appealing, without pose or frigidity. Like Raphael's philosophers, these famous justiciaries move in a larger air than

ours, yet keep their credibility and retain our sympathy. In monumentality and repose it seems to me to excel the best decoration of Delacroix, while it leaves the best of Puvis looking a little bleak and bloodless. The great fresco for Lincoln's Inn was done, at the painter's suggestion, for the costs, but the benchers insisted on adding a handsome testimonial. Watts characteristically declared his most accomplished and consistent work to be a failure, but in his later years he valued it, and its successful cleaning and preservation from London soot just before he died was a source of great satisfaction to him. It was his single venture in that mixed form which we may call pedantically typological design, it suggests what the "House of Life" might have been in its historic portions, and it serves as the transition from history to pure symbolism.

To the sixties belong the designs of the "Court of Death," "Time, Death, and Judgment," "The Genius of Greek Poetry," "Ariadne in Naxos," "Daphne," and "Pygmalion." The still more famous compositions, "Love and Death," "Love and Life," and "Hope," belong to the seventies. And in the next decade, as he passed threescore and ten, an epic of Genesis, comprising the three Eves

and the story of Cain, was partly executed, being a fragmentary episode of the "House of Life." The last twenty years of his life were largely devoted to revising and perfecting the old designs, to increasing the gallery of great contemporaries, and to finishing his portrait statue of "Tennyson" for Lincoln, and the plaster model of the colossal horseman typifying "Physical Energy." Only such general landmarks may be noted, since years often elapsed between the tracing of a composition on the canvas and its completion. The older he grew the closer became his dual allegiance to portraiture and pure symbolism, so that if one had to represent his maturity by two pictures, one might well choose the second "Hope" of 1885, sounding her broken harp among azure depths, and the magnificent "Walter Crane" of 1891.

Concerning the critic's duty, Watts has left the following warning:

Critics usually fail because they do not regard art and literature from the same point of view, and as occupying the same level, seldom taking into account what the artist has to say, but only how he has said it. When a literary production is offered to the world, the first thing to be considered is, whether from a literary or historical or religious or scientific point of view it has any reason for existing at

all, and after that its merits as a literary production. Until something of the kind is applied to art the critic can hardly be of service to the artist.

Accepting as I do this definition of the critic's function, our chief concern is to weigh the value of the kind of thought and feeling in which Watts chose to live. But before raising this crucial matter certain technical questions may properly be faced. For if it be true that what counts is the greatness of the artist's soul, it is also true that his means of expression must be adequate. If those critics are right who assert that Watts's handling is hesitant and bad, his design extravagant, his color lurid and inharmonious, why, then, whatever the seriousness of his inspiration, he remains a painter of minor order. His devotees must undergo the reproach of insensitiveness to fine painting as such, and his considerable vogue among the *intellectuels* of to-day may be reckoned a kind of sentimentalism.

As a matter of fact, I believe Watts was one of the few notable technicians of our day, in the sense of having a distinctive personal message of an important kind and of working out an individual and appropriate rhetoric. Men who pass as great modern technicians—for example, Whistler and Manet—have frequently been mainly dexterous and have left pictures

that are already perishing. On the basal points of design Watts habitually practised the syncopated forms of representation which were proper to his heroic subjects and scale, and which for that matter he found in the Parthenon marbles and Titian. But Cézanne or Degas himself was not more scrupulous in indicating the essential differences between hard and soft, stiff and flexible. There is no uncertainty as to the movement, mass, and bony structure of a Watts figure. If he waived the modern fanatical emphasis of mass, it was because his purpose was decorative and moral, and not fully pictorial. In the easy and impressive adjustment of heroic forms within a rhythmical design he revived convincingly the grand manner of the High Renaissance. Certain summary indications of landscape in him are unique in art. His color has distinctive and beautiful traits. Certain blues seem the very sign of immensity; certain reds, of the perils that beset the soul, besides glowing intrinsically with the force of sapphire and carbuncle. And these effects of color in the major chord Watts obtained by setting dry color alongside of dry color without varnishing, glazing, or other hazardous and perishable manipulation. Nobody commanded the colors as he did. The "Hope" is as lovely an arrangement in blue as

Cazin or Whistler ever conceived, with the advantage of its meaning to boot. I can think of no picture that rivals it on its own ground except another equally famous subject picture and equally precious in tone, Winslow Homer's "Eight Bells."

In Watts's portraiture the infinity of little touches has been objected to. But each stroke makes for vitality and character and luminousness. Set a good Watts portrait beside a good Bonnat, and it will be easy to see which has been done to death by painstaking, which enriched. In fact, the general disposition to see in Watts a feeble executant represents a common misunderstanding as to what fine technic in painting really is. The modern eye sets undue store by what it calls tone, meaning only the muted harmonies of color; and confuses fine brush work with mere dexterity. Now, of dexterity, Watts had, as he confessed himself, very little and increasingly less. In his later years he rarely could compass the suavity and directness of the sketch of Lady Somers and the portrait of Mrs. Wyndham. It was his belief that no solemn emotion could be expressed by the swift and nervous handling so much in vogue. His method was consciously slow and deliberate, but assured and progressive. Where he failed, as it seems to me he

did in the more florid "Eve," in the urchin called "Whence-Whither?" and in the more cadaverous and seer-like of the Tennyson portraits, the fault was in conception and not in execution. I can see that an eye trained to modern naturalistic color will resent a coloration that is conventional, decorative, and often symbolic, but I cannot conceive of anybody who has fairly grasped and accepted the intention of the portraits and compositions wishing them other than they are. And as to lack of dexterity, imagine our requiring it of a poet, setting him down as an incompetent because he lacks the swoop of the trained journalist. Yet some such exaction we do lay upon the painter, forgetting that dexterity, an excellent capacity in itself, is proper only to him whose subject-matter lends itself to swift choice, understanding, and execution. No, Watts was not dexterous, but in the resolute attack upon the fundamental problems of form and color, and in a solution personal, meaningful, and instinct with a peculiar solemn beauty, Watts may surely be ranked with the very few great technicians of his century.

By his own standards this would be doubtful praise. He held that only expression counted, and that methods of expression which

obtrude themselves are bad. And, in fact, any fair estimate of Watts's art implies, as I have said, a criticism of his entire stock of ideals. He represents a kind of mysticism, which, while alien to the ordinary man of his day, was characteristic of the finest spirits of the Victorian age. James Drummond, the evangelist; Tennyson, Matthew Arnold, Gladstone, Browning, George Eliot, Frederic Harrison, Ruskin, and less markedly Carlyle, illustrate various phases of a common tendency to identify religion with serious contemplation of social ethics. Most of these thinkers set a minimum value on cult and dogma and ecclesiastical tradition, proceeding to a kind of reconstruction of values in the light of social duty. This was the mood of Watts, and on more than one occasion he spoke of his works as "ethical reflections." Such a life constitutes a sort of *via media* between self-sufficing faith in authority and the prevalent materialism. About the only religious discovery of the Victorian age was this middle course. The alternative seemed, perhaps falsely, to be sheer materialism—the orthodox scientific attitude. For the materialist, life is a curious chemistry, of which thought is a mechanical product and death the mere clogging. Sin and virtue are implied in physi-

cal reactions running back indefinitely through a widening group of ancestors. Hence, conscience is largely a morbid excess of memory. Love is simply a tardy product of sexual differentiation. Justice is what has on the whole proved tolerable and convenient in restraining the individual for the common weal. Soul is the capacity for maintaining the bodily chemistry, and is virtually uniform from the amœba to Shakespeare. So, axiomatically, materialism explains the issues of life and death, and where it admits mystery it counsels indifference, since nothing has value for life which is not clearly knowable. Such is the orthodox scientific attitude with which the Victorian age had to cope, and it is fair to add that on such a basis a fine stoicism is possible.

But indifference, the mediæval sin of *accidia*, was the most impossible vice for a true Victorian to acquire, and with few exceptions the finest spirits revolted vehemently against the simple materialistic formula for "seeing life as it is." Some, with Cardinal Newman, reacted into obscurantism, more worked out the middle road of which Tennyson and Browning are the poets and Watts is the artist champion. To hold to the essentials of Christianity while divesting it of outworn mythology was the task,

or, rather, to substitute for the old a new, human, and valid mythology, based upon the most general ideas. A poet indeed could stop short of the mythological stage. Great words and ideas suffice him. A painter must see his ideas in clear vision or keep them out of his art.

Watts saw them in exalted human form, and his gift was to be very clear in his generalities. It is significant that as convinced a Christian as he almost never treated a Biblical theme, and then only such as are most unspecific and broadly typical—Eve, Cain, the Good Samaritan. It was as if he would not compromise his faith by linking it with disputable matter of fact, nor cheapen sacred legend itself by a merely historic adherence. With regard to classical mythology, where symbolic values were overt and no issue of fact implied, he pursued a freer course. But his chief concern was to ascertain the elemental human values of his time, and to create therefor an appropriate mythology less vulnerable than the old. He conceived man as projected between the mysteries of "Life and Death" and sustained in his perilous transit by that summation of the virtues, "Love," fortified, too, by the remembrance of such as have greatly loved and endeavored. So far his moral dynamic was that

of his age. Where the great artist in him came out was in the imperious need of giving visible and human form to these simple elements of a spiritually contemplative life. Nowhere did he show himself more the artist than in his life-long dissent from the literalism of his friend Ruskin, and his vindication of the right of the soul to shadow forth its finest intimations by its own light. So he became a mythmaker—enduing with our own flesh the forces and ideals with which we must live—but of myths platonically simple and defensible. In his embodiments he sought the aid of those artists who have envisaged mankind with the most candid and hopeful eyes—Pheidias and Giorgione and Titian. Perhaps his chief significance is to have linked a peculiarly modern way of thinking with the noblest traditional forms of sculpture and painting. In energy of creation he was among the greatest artists of his century. Delacroix at times excels him, but is febrile and of shifting view-point. Against Watts's energy of invention, a true *furia* for all its sweet reasonableness, the lovely retrospective idyllism of Burne-Jones and Puvis assumes a pallor of irreality. Rossetti's mediævalism looks flimsy, Besnard's amazing and genial pyrotechnics seem merely theatrical. The men

who best bear the comparison with him are those of wholly alien genius: masters of shorthand like Manet and Courbet and Winslow Homer, scornful stylists like Whistler and Degas, strenuous devotees of mass such as Cézanne. In creative accomplishment and valid relationship to the great art of old none seems to stand so well beside him as Millet, who, refining his actual observations into types, seems to represent a more normal exercise of the artistic spirit—more normal, possibly, only when viewed by our modern standards, for the way of Watts was very much that of the Greeks and the great Italians.

I have written vainly if any one confuses the eminently creative methods of Watts with the arid theological symbolism of the Middle Ages which it superficially recalls, or yet with the cheap symbolism of current decoration—the exuberant front of the Paris model as "Plenty," her muscular back as "Industry." This is merely a survival of the early eighteenth-century fashion of capitalizing all personified abstractions. From the model Watts made the most scrupulous studies, but when his great canvases were in progress no model was present. He was a true visionary, but of the mind's eye.

A kind of abstract vitality his compositions

and portraits should always retain. His gift of embodying the finest essence of the individual soul and the bare elements of moral thinking should retain permanent value. His gallery of portraits alone will give permanency and dignity to what otherwise would pass chiefly for a shopkeeping and ironmongering age. The representative and Victorian value of his symbolic designs may well fluctuate, as men think well or ill of the Victorian *via media.* His art is not likely to confront a more materialistic age than that through which it won in his lifetime. Some more delicate moral adjustment than his own and that of his friend Tennyson the future may well have in store. Yet, even so, his mood was so elemental and warm that life should persist in it, so simple that it should readily adjust itself to other modes of thinking; while his concrete qualities of noble line and mass and splendid color and reflective handling are so eminent that they should ever appeal to the enlightened dilettante, if, indeed, the future is to keep a place for a type of detached enthusiasm of which Watts himself thoroughly disapproved.

X

JOHN LA FARGE—AN APPRECIATION

JOHN LA FARGE—AN APPRECIATION

The charm and the personal authority of John La Farge were such that no acquaintance of his may hope impartially to weigh his long and multiform achievement. He restored to dignity among us the art of mural decoration; he invented a new and beautiful technic for stained glass; but in our moment of loss these deeds seem someway less than the man himself. Hundreds of cultured Americans who knew his work but vaguely valued his eloquence and bowed to his taste. As an arbiter, only Charles Eliot Norton rivalled him, and Mr. La Farge had the advantage of direct and guiding companionship with many of our best artists. Himself a near inheritor of the finest intellectualism of France, acquainted with artists and critics from Paris to Tokio, widely read in the classics of the East and West, an observer of cosmopolitan and of savage man—he represented to us a kind of universality of taste and worldly wisdom and was the living link between America, prone to forget its own yesterdays, and all the great past.

Two incidents stand out in my mind among many reminiscences. As an under-classman in the Romanist College at Fordham, John La Farge read with a Jesuit tutor who was a bibliopole, and the lad began and finished his Homer in the *editio princeps*. A few years ago a party of American biologists touched at a remote Polynesian island. Seeing white men, the interpreters came running down the beach, shouting: "How is John?" There was no need of explanations. On either side they recalled a gently quizzical wanderer who camped near the native villages, reverently observing their rites and gradually overcoming their superstitious reluctance to be sketched. I like to recall that the revolutionist Gauguin and the eclectic John La Farge both craved this bath of primitive life; both had it, and both variously found rejuvenation in the experience.

The artists of America have come mostly of old colonial British stock and their development has usually involved some struggle with ascetic Puritan traditions. The La Farge family, which was gladly adopted into the urbane society of Washington Irving's New York, had kept its Continental and Catholic affiliations. As a young midshipman, John La Farge's father was captured in the disastrous

San Domingo expedition of 1806. He escaped to the United States, made a competence as a shipping-merchant, and married Mlle. Binnse de St. Victor, whose kinsmen are still remembered as scholars and publicists in Paris. Some time after the incunabular episode of Homer, young John La Farge (in his twenty-first year, 1856) went to Paris and began to work with Couture. Perceiving the new student's promise and dreading to make "a little Couture of him," the master set him adrift. Drifting meant the salon of the St. Victors, where men of Gautier's type and Turgeneff's congregated —the old masters of the Louvre and, perhaps more than all, the resonant decorations of Delacroix. I have sometimes thought that if Mr. La Farge showed me special indulgence, it was because at our first meeting I told him how I had discovered for myself and loved the "Heliodorus" and the "Wrestling Jacob," of St. Sulpice.

For some years in New York, young La Farge struggled against his manifest vocation. He read law, pursued his art-historical studies —the Arundel Society woodcuts of the Paduan Giottos were his delight—drenched himself in philosophy, history, and belles-lettres. Soon the color-prints of Japan were added to his

portfolios, and his final emergence as an experimental painter of flowers and landscapes is due almost equally to this new inspiration and to the friendship of William Hunt. Trained in the direct methods of Couture, an admirer and friend of Millet, a keen wit in his own right, Hunt was just the mentor to bring to focus the discursive eclecticism of La Farge. They worked together about the rocky meadows and tidal coves of Newport. William James was at this time another of Hunt's protégés and assistants, and gave great promise as a mural decorator. Art was soon to yield him to philosophy—and for the classic contours that we might have had on our walls we have instead the iridescent vagueness of the pragmatic philosophy.

Through the 'sixties, La Farge (now married) produced, under Preraphaelite influence tempered and broadened by that of Japan, his most charming easel pictures. There are singularly poetical transcripts of vales in the Newport moorland, a house in snow, above all a series of great flowers—water-lilies, magnolias, and the like—painted in heroic proportions with boldest stroke and richest coloring. Toward the 'seventies, illustration served as a recreation. In "The Afrit and the Bottle,"

"The Pied Piper," "The Wolf Charmer," and "Bishop Hatto," a shrewd observer will mark the drastic teaching of Hokusai. For La Farge's intimate landscape and flower pieces the time was not yet ripe. With the Hudson River School, now in its hectic autumnal glory, the scenic ideal was peremptory. The White Mountains, the Catskills—these were the panoramic staple; great painters appropriately frequented greater mountains—the Rockies and the Andes. So that La Farge's turnover to mural painting in the 'seventies was at once an advance and a retreat.

Before passing to his monumental designs on canvas and in glass, some general considerations as to his talent: He was the most learned painter of our times. From the mystics of early China to those of Barbizon, the history of painting was an open book to him; and, beyond the mere practice, his curiosity constantly moved about æsthetic theory. To him the great art of old became a second nature, and with nature was equally his reservoir of forms. So he never hesitated to appropriate an older motive when it fitted his need, and he mocked the critics who failed to recognize his obvious borrowings. If one analyzes his most ambitious decoration, "The Ascension"

(painted in 1887 for the New York church of that name), its composite character is evident. The composition is merely a grandiose amplification of Palma Vecchio's "Assumption" in the Venice Academy. The landscape itself has, under Japanese leading, gained suavity; the soaring Christ in a wreath of attendant angels is a Venetian enlargement of an Umbrian conception; the color has taken much from Titian and more from Delacroix—and yet the whole thing is unified, rhythmic, full of the specific hue and urbanity of La Farge himself. This derivative element in his work was at times a weakness. When hurried, he paid with his taste rather than with his observation.

Still it is much to have had an American painter on easy borrowing terms with Giotto, Mantegna, Giovanni Bellini, Titian, and Raphael. La Farge carried into his great designs some of the defects of his desultory training. His figures do not always stand well; he adopted the shifts and, more rarely, the makeshifts that we find in all swift executants; but he rarely missed the accent of the monumental style. I have heard our best living draftsman in one breath smile at the drawing of the exedra in the "Plato" made for St. Paul,

Minnesota, and sigh for its loftiness of conception.

He renewed the lost tradition of the Renaissance workshop. From 1876 (when he organized that gallant emergency squad which under cruel conditions of time and convenience decorated Trinity Church, Boston) Mr. La Farge always had about him a corps of assistants. ranging from intelligent artisans to accomplished artists. Upon all of them he impressed his will so completely that even their invention cast itself in his forms. One who was long his chief assistant told me that there were scores of drawings and sketches about the studio which might be his own or the master's—he honestly could not tell. A well-known art critic pleaded that the cartoon of the "Confucius" (every stroke of which was executed by this assistant) should be preserved in a museum as an imperishable memorial of La Farge's handiwork. His workshop dealt impartially with designs for glass or wall, accepting also humble decorative jobs, and drawing in on occasion wood-carvers and inlayers, sculptors, and even the casual visitor.

And here I am reminded of a club discussion concerning sculpture by proxy, the subletting of contracts, the employment of stu-

dents' sketches, etc. Mr. La Farge diverted an argument that was becoming too emphatic by the following anecdote:

"The other day," he said, "I was painting on the garden of the 'Confucius' while my chief assistant was working on one of the heads. In came V. I., and I set him at a bit of drapery. Time was valuable, you see. L. looked in, and I set him at a bit of foreground foliage. I saw that the dead coloring of the sky needed deepening. At that moment my secretary, Miss B., entered with a letter. I gave her a broad brush, showed her how to charge it and sweep it with a mechanical stroke, and against her protest she, too, was enlisted."

With that ineffable restrained smile of his he turned to me and asked: "Now, whose picture was that?"

And I was lucky enough to blunder out: "It was a fine La Farge."

In this spirit the great decorators have always worked, and it is only by such devoted co-operation that we can hope to revive the monumental style. Mr. La Farge's genius for leadership—such men as Kenyon Cox, F. D. Millet, Will H. Low, W. B. Van Ingen, Humphreys Johnston, Ivan Olinsky, and the late Francis Lathrop, among others, have gladly

served him—has almost as great importance as his painting. If there were many such shops as his, the complete irreality of much of our art instruction would be abated. Such clever and legitimate use of assistance did not prevent him from achieving remarkable autographic feats. The whole landscape of the "Confucius" was painted by himself from sketches made in Japan. The grandiose "Moses on Sinai" (in the same series), with its magnificent volcanic landscape, a Hawaiian reminiscence, was begun and finished with his own hand, though he had reached his seventieth year. But he would never admit any inferiority in the work done by his helpers, and here he felt like his great predecessors of the Renaissance. I think that he was right. Nothing is more truly his, for example, than the heads of the sages in the "Confucius"—which were painted by Ivan Olinsky.

It was the architect H. H. Richardson who first gave La Farge his chance as a decorator. In the last months of 1876 the great spaces of Trinity Church were filled with designs that subsequent rearrangements of the church have sadly marred. At every point there were obstacles. Mr. La Farge had even to find the colors, as it then was the practice of the pro-

fessional decorators to use fading hues that soon provided new jobs. Reviewing this work after many years, Mr. La Farge admitted its defects but maintained that almost every bit of it was "living and would be impossible to duplicate." The next year he was working at two panels, "The Resurrection" and "The Marys and the Angels," for St. Thomas's, New York. Here he had the aid of the young St. Gaudens, but the decorative ensemble planned for the apse remained incomplete for lack of funds, and a few years ago they perished by fire. During this time his attention was increasingly engrossed with designing for glass, but (besides minor decorations) he painted in 1885 two panels for the Church of the Incarnation; and, in 1887, after his return from Japan, "The Ascension," which is perhaps his most important religious picture.

Among decorations for private houses I need mention only the most complete. In the New York house of Cornelius Vanderbilt, La Farge contrived painted designs of "Night and Day" and "The Seasons," designed carved woodwork, inlaid and incrusted in Far Eastern fashion, set one of his largest windows, and even invented the incidental embroideries and hangings. In 1888 he planned the general decora-

Copyright by John La Farge.

"Moses Receiving the Law on Mt. Sinai," by La Farge.

From the cartoon for the mural painting in the Supreme Court of the Capitol at St. Paul, Minn.

tive scheme for the great Church of the Paulist Fathers, but the fatality that attended most of his larger enterprises permitted only a partial achievement of the decoration. The years 1886 and 1890 were notable for the Japanese sojourn and the long voyage in Polynesia. Refreshed by these intervals, he pursued with the seal of perfection his inventions in opalescent glass, enlarged the pictorial record of his South Sea voyaging, but, with the exception of two fine lunettes for Bowdoin College, did rather little in the way of wall-painting. From this time, too, lecturing and writing increasingly engaged him and he won substantial distinction in still another art. From his seventieth year dates an amazing recrudescence. With the zest and energy of a young man he undertook four great lunettes for the State-house of Minnesota. Hebrew, Greek, Chinese, and Mediæval Law were the subjects. The treatment was at once decorative and realistic. He refused to proceed with the symbolic garden that forms the background of the "Confucius" until it had been approved by a Chinese philosopher. The "Moses" and the "Confucius" in this series may be regarded as his ripest productions; the "Plato" is hardly inferior. The whole series reveals the inner

fire that burned high in this invalid about to die.

My acquaintance with Mr. La Farge dates only from these last seven years. To me, as to a host of remote admirers, he displayed almost impersonally the treasures of his spirit. But John La Farge could do nothing with complete impersonality. However far his talk ranged—and it often embraced strange incidents of his own young manhood, mellow glints of Oriental wisdom or classic lore, the doings of complicated men in Japan or of simple men in the South Seas—whatever the range of his talk, he always took the listener along. Men thronged to hear him, but he never gave that sense of monologue which Carlyle is said to have left. For Mr. La Farge, his talk was merely one of the many fine arts that he practised. Under uncongenial surroundings he would fall back upon exquisite trifling, and with the right hearer his eloquence could swell to an organ note—for a moment only, and then came the quizzical warning smile which said that we must not be too serious for too long. Out of the fulness of his reading and experience he so modulated his evenings that there never was a sense of haste, incompleteness, or abrupt conclusion. About

him there was something of the fine reserved geniality of a Roman prelate—his head seemed made for a cardinal's cap—but this attitude never sank into the merely professional. In spite of his frail form, evidently myopic eyes, and general sense of extreme physical delicacy, his effect was of robust and almost aggressive fastidiousness. I trust that some of his intimates may commemorate fittingly the talk of John La Farge. The subject is rich and treacherous. To do it well would require almost the tact of the master spokesman that is gone.

My own experience in this matter is comparatively slight and was confined to the afterglow that witnessed the decorations for St. Paul. May I recall one evening in which he gently rebuked me as a critic for writing as if the artist were free to choose between many courses? He went on to show how the first firm line set on a canvas excludes all incompatible lines thenceforth, so that by the third or fourth leading contour, the design must advance by a kind of fatality. Similarly the earliest assertion of color limits subsequent possibilities; the second almost determines the scheme thenceforth; always the picture itself is diminishing the artist's freedom and reduc-

ing him to obedience. All this was done with the most humorous ease; and slight gestures, subtly narrowing in sweep as they gained in intensity, accompanied the demonstration. He left me to infer that the mass of bad pictures in the world come about because so many painters neither perceive nor obey the inner law of the picture itself, but in the name of freedom work throughout at lawless haphazard.

I like to recall, too, that once I consulted him on certain curious and interesting characters in the early history of Newport, his summer home. There were forgotten incidents bearing on the early reaction of Europe on the young republic, a little chapter in the history of taste to be elucidated. Without request of mine he pursued the rather blind trail zealously, interviewed old people, and recreated for me in fair if shadowy contours the image of a legendary past. A literary plan of mine (of which this episode was part) came to naught, but I feel that the incident has worth if only as showing how vitally John La Farge had lived into our native American tradition. His cosmopolitanism was not of the sort that scorns what is near at hand. The quaint Newport æsthete who knew Marie Antoinette and

Count Fersen and lived to see his own gentle associates succumb politically to the shouters for Andrew Jackson—this forgotten great gentleman took rank in Mr. La Farge's interest with the sages of China, the literary kings of Gautier's Paris, and the tawny monarchs of Polynesia.

Mr. La Farge's writing grew naturally out of his talking and is hardly to be treated apart from it. His two volumes on the *Great Masters* abound in just and happy reflections, but they lack his most personal accent. The Scammon lectures on the Barbizon School, called "The Higher Life in Art," which he delivered in 1903 before the Chicago Art Institute, are for him perfunctory. Some of his best writing is included in the volume, *An Artist's Letters from Japan*. By rare good luck, the lectures which he gave in the Metropolitan Museum in 1893 were collected in a book, *Considerations on Painting*, and though Mr. La Farge did a considerable amount of occasional writing of note, it is this book which shows him most himself. In it he exposed all the facets of his rich and harmonious nature, and the revelation is, while inspiriting and ever fascinating, not quite enlightening. That law of sacrifice which he required and practised in his

own art is not practised by him in the alien art of letters. Every proposition is curiously involved and qualified. He hesitates before affirmations; the exceptions obscure the rules. Of this fact he was wholly conscious and he excused it by the necessary complication of his material, by the inherent difficulty of converting facts of vision into terms of hearing and understanding, and finally by his desire to tell the whole truth. So *Considerations on Painting* lacks the firm contour of the classics of art criticism, but in compensation it is perhaps the honestest book that was ever written on the subject, and its intimations (like the author's own painting) are made not in line and mass but in reverberations of color. It is difficult reading, but hardly another book of modern times so irradiates the finest wisdom.

Hear the retort courteous to precisians who require a sign-post: "Offensive to them must be the work of art, the man, the kind of view of any truth, which cannot easily be held in a short formula, which has any impression of superiority—and escapes their grasp." Of art in general, has the creative act ever been better described than in these words: "Each form of art is a restoration of nature to what she

should be; an emphasis of some hidden view that escapes us, otherwise, from the size of the entire world"? Characteristically, his finest comment on the consummate art of Greece was evoked not by the Parthenon marbles but by divinatory reading of the rude yet vivid portrait-heads then lately discovered at Fayum:

> Anything made, anything even influenced by that little race of artists, the Greeks, brings back our minds to its first, legitimate, ever-continuing admiration; with them the floating Goddess of Chance took off her sandals and remained.

After his death the South Sea journals, of which Miss Cecilia Waern's memoirs gave a delightful foretaste, were published, as well as a new book of criticism entitled *One Hundred Masterpieces*.

In all of the greatest artists (Mr. La Farge once wrote) "there is a humble workman who knows his trade and likes it." The sentiment is significant of his own long devotion to the art of painting in glass, and to the zeal with which he endeavored to perfect its methods. His most notable discovery, that of composing in opalescent glass, was as simple as the standing egg of Columbus. In the early 'seventies Mr. La Farge undertook a stained-glass window and was appalled by the mean quality

of the available glass. The best pieces, he found, were culled by the European designers, and the remnants were sent to us.

One morning his eye fell upon a piece of commercial opalescent "china"—a soap-dish or the like. Struck by its glow, he tried it with the other glass and found that its shimmering hues served wonderfully well as a harmonizer and intensifier of the other colors. For a time he bought toilet articles made of this material and cut out of them disks which he set in his windows. Soon followed the manufacture of similar but much finer material on a large scale. As he experimented he discovered new uses for corrugated pot-metal—glass stained through all its substance. The wrinkles yielded not merely splendid complementary reflections, as crimson upon certain greens, and violets in certain yellows, but could be selected or contrived to represent drapery or textures of architecture and landscape. He invented not merely more splendid colors but also denser translucencies than had ever before been known—and he tells us himself that he was stimulated to his researches by a desire to rival the glory of Chinese inlays of precious stones on jade. Had he done no more than to provide these new and beautiful materials, he

would be sure of a limited immortality in the craft. But he did much more than that. He found the art of painting in glass, on the one hand, debased through bad materials—thin surface enamels instead of the old lustrous pot-metal—and, on the other hand, cramped by imitation of archaic designs. Men had forgotten that the supporting leads were the real skeleton and must be treated expressively as outlines. He naturally adapted for windows the sort of figure subjects that he had already used for wall spaces. Thus he rejuvenated window-making much as the great Venetian painters of the Renaissance renewed the decaying art of mosaic. His work and theirs have been criticised for the same reason.

It is urged that a colored window should not be pictorial. The small, subdivided, schematic designs that we find in Chartres Cathedral are held up as the canon. I cannot argue this matter at length. There are people who think that Tintoretto and Veronese were poor decorators as compared with the Byzantines or Puvis de Chavannes. Time is lost in persuading those who depart from such perfectly crystallized preconceptions. The common sense of the matter perhaps is this: When glass ceases to be merely decorative and, being

monumentally pictorial, becomes the major adornment of an interior, all the rest of the decoration should be subordinated to the windows and of course harmonized with them. There is no more pathetic aspect of Mr. La Farge's activity than this, that he sent away masterpiece after masterpiece to be installed amid flimsy architecture and nondescript decoration. Because the old schematic glass and its better modern imitations are beautiful, seems no reason for confining the art within a style adapted to an architecture and a painting that are no longer ours.

A mere catalogue of Mr. La Farge's fine windows would occupy the space of this essay. Among them he liked to emphasize "The Battle Window," in Memorial Hall at Harvard. It was finished in 1878 and embodied all his discoveries to that date. Plain and opalescent glass are varied by amethysts and other translucent stones; there is plating, doubling of the glass to secure depth of color, and even a little enamel painting upon the glass. So impetuous a design as these young warriors charging has perhaps never had so splendid an incarnation. No illustration gives any impression of the magnificence of these windows.

By his personal energy and example he trained workmen capable of conveying to glass the mere indications of a color sketch. It was not long before a host of imitators arose; and, though men of talent were among them, few have handled successfully this color instrument of many keys. To the improvement of materials and processes he set himself continually. By a minute mosaic fused together in the furnace, he found that he could get (without painting) all the subtleties of modelling (as faces and hands). But the expense of the method prevented its extensive use. By fusing a thin metal binder between the plates of glass, he eliminated the wide black leads. His aim was ever to give to composition in glass the freedom of painting itself. He even perfected a method by which no metal binder is necessary. The famous peacock window (now a chief ornament of the Worcester Art Museum) is the finest expression of this technic. In a manner, it combines the beauties of glass, lacquer, and enamel. I doubt if pure color has ever before had its play so fully. In a word, he carried the art of design in glass to finesses before undreamed of, and a hardy genius might well begin where he left off. But these latter refinements imply a patience that

is rarely to be found in the modern artist and a liberality at which even the new-style Mæcenas balks.

In the right use of memory Mr. La Farge laid the essence of art, and its chief duty he held to be a kind of glorified commemoration. That any beautiful thing should pass away unrecorded was painful to him. He himself was to perpetuate an Arcadian beauty that wanes to its sure end. Cruising in the South Seas, in 1890, with his friend Mr. Henry Adams, Mr. La Farge observed the solemn and beautiful rites that had enchanted Herman Melville fifty years before. Among these nude folk the body still had its eloquence. Their occupations by land and sea awakened echoes of the Odyssey; their racial dances had a rhythmic character all their own. Into the life of these children of nature the wanderers entered sympathetically. Mataafa, the dethroned king of Samoa, was their friend. In Tahiti, by adoption of the Chieftainess Ariitamai, they gained the right to claim the God-Shark as their ancestor. With a singular intensity, simplicity, and objectivity, Mr. La Farge set himself to sketching the islanders. With a directness that he may have learned from the Japa-

nese, he deployed sapphire sierras and feathery green date-palms across curving and reverberant skies. But the finest sketches are those which catch the collective life of the island folk. Here you see the swaying brown torsos in the Siva dance, by night or in the obscurity of a thatched lodge; here the Taupo (a maiden charged with the duty of greeting strangers) prances down and her flower garlands fly widely; here gray elders sit in conference, or a dull girl leads a blind man along the coral strand. What distinguishes these sketches from much painting of exotic subjects is their sincerity. Think how often the Orient has been exploited in the melodramatic manner of Byron, and then take any of these South Sea studies in which the scene is portrayed for its own sake. Mr. La Farge, the sage, the fastidious cosmopolitan, had the art to become as a little child—or even as these brown friends of his—and thus he saw their life, not with their eyes (for such vision is denied them), but keenly, honestly, and with human sympathy.

When I think of the manifold charm and accomplishment of the man that is gone, I marvel that his fame was not greater. The élite of two hemispheres valued him, but he made no such public impression as, say, Lord

Leighton, a man of smaller and more restricted gifts. Henry James calls the Church of the Ascension, with its great wall-painting and many windows, "one of the most appealing of personal monuments." I linger in it many times a year; and, though occasionally a suppliant comes for prayer, I have never seen any one observe either the "Ascending Christ" in the chancel or the storied windows in the walls. Perhaps Mr. La Farge's essentially fastidious and aristocratic personality—an aristocracy, however, compatible with universal sympathy—made him an alien in a civilization that loves uniformity and averages. Even more the range of his accomplishment may have baffled the public. Mankind, as he himself remarked, mistrusts what it cannot readily classify—and Mr. La Farge defied classifications. With a rueful sense of the fact that the public wants the artist to be as overtly a specialist as the policeman, Mr. La Farge's friend, Elihu Vedder, writes in his charming autobiography:

> How often I have wished that I had dedicated myself to the painting of cabbages! I mean painting them splendidly, with all the witchery of light and shade and color, until the picture should contain all the pictorial elements needed for a Descent from the Cross or a Transfiguration and no gallery would be complete without a cabbage by V.

John La Farge, like his old friend, declined to specialize in cabbages, and both have had to find their reward otherwise than in public acclaim. It is idle to guess how the future will regard the art of John La Farge. Personally I believe there will be an imperishable residuum of his great and varied accomplishment, and I am sure that so long as any live who heard his voice, his name will evoke, with an old elation, a deep regret.

XI

FAR EASTERN PAINTING

FAR EASTERN PAINTING

I

CHINA

The Western artist paints usually with viscous colors on a non-absorbent material, which permits retouches and corrections. The Far Eastern artist paints preferably in fluid colors upon highly absorbent materials—paper or silk—where correction or retouch means ruin. Evidently, the Far Eastern painter is bound to a scrupulously thoughtful and precise technic. This contrast of material conditions corresponds to profound discrepancies of racial temperament and æsthetic aim. European art appeals largely to memories of things, Chinese art appeals chiefly to memories of feelings; European art treasures as a chief maxim *ars est celare artem*, Chinese art utterly repudiates a requirement that would deprive it of conscious joy in fine and economical workmanship; European art is judged mostly by correspondence with fact and conceals its means, Far Eastern art is judged merely by its correspondence with fine emotions and avows its

means. Or, pursuing the antithesis, Occidental art will tend to be realistic or, under favorable conditions of selection and arrangement, classic, but there will always be an implied reference to a common experience that must not be offended; whereas Oriental art will tend to be exclusively romantic, setting no bounds to the emotions and permitting any exaggeration or distortion of common experience that the refined imagination may suggest.

This contrast of classic and romantic at which we are arrived very well illustrates both the usefulness and the danger of these general terms, for we must immediately attenuate the contrast by remarking that the romanticism of the Far Eastern painter is highly disciplined and limited by restrictions, sometimes hieratic, sometimes traditional in his craft. For example, a Chinese painter of the best period (roughly speaking, coincident with the Sung dynasty, from the tenth to the thirteenth century) is perfectly free to make a mountain ten times higher than it is, but he is bound to draw its edge according to one of a few standard formulas. These prescribed strokes, though based on the Chinese notion that painting is akin to calligraphy, are also admirable syntheses of the chief forms of

structure in nature. Within less than a score of such strokes (for the correlation of which with facts of stratification, cleavage, erosion, etc., we must refer the reader to Mr. Taki's interesting pages) the Chinese romanticist must find his repertory. His art no sooner attains the lyrical freedom of music than, like music, it accepts the straitest conventions.

And here, again, is a rather instructive difference between West and East. Precepts in the West are likely to apply to ways of feeling —to be, that is, a sheer drag upon the artist of talent—whereas, in the East, precepts are generally confined to ways of doing and give the artist both a steadying discipline and a kind of social support. Another difference: the Chinese or Japanese artist is subject only to the authority of his peers or betters; great artists, learned priests, æsthetes, connoisseurs are his lawgivers. In fact, there existed in China a varied and flexible art reinforced by a subtile and exquisite criticism at the time when all Europe lay contentedly in a doddering Byzantinism. The European artist, on the contrary, has usually been more or less at the mercy of his æsthetic inferiors. Plain men have marked out the limits which genius at best might only evade. This fact will account for the rarefied

quality of the best Chinese and Japanese landscapes. Their excellence is not accessible to untrained intelligences. Beside them the most diaphanous of Whistler's nocturnes would seem just a shade too explicit. It is an aristocratic art, compounded of subtile understandings, of permitted audacities and syncopations, beside which Claude, Corot, and Turner at his broadest seem comparatively common, accessible, and democratic. Thus, with its tendency to sink into cheap realism, European art is, after all, far more widely representative of the civilizations that have produced it, and so more humanly significant, while Far Eastern art achieves a higher emotional intensity and a more strenuously choice and beautiful craftsmanship, after all, within far narrower limits.

For the student of painting all periods before the Sung dynasty, which ruled from the tenth through the thirteenth century, are merely legendary. Early historians and critics give us some idea of the works of the T'ang dynasty, the seventh and eighth centuries, and of the five dynasties from 907 to 960; but since no works surely of these periods have come down, our concern is chiefly with Sung painting. We have merely to note that the artists and critics

of this period, perhaps erroneously, regarded themselves as decadent. Here ancestor-worship may well have caused public expressions of inferiority which by no means corresponded to intimate convictions. It is hard to imagine anything finer than the best landscape scrolls which have been transmitted to us by these self-styled epigoni. So fine was Sung painting that the Tartar conquerors of the Yuan dynasty, the fourteenth century, did but continue the established manner. In spite of patrons like Kublai Khan, there was during the Tartar sway a marked falling off in all the arts.

When the Ming emperors, ruling from the latter part of the fourteenth to the middle of the seventeenth century, restored the native dominion, the old, severe, philosophical tradition of Chinese art had pretty well worn itself out. Elegance was now the quality most desired. Beside the traditional landscapes and religious subjects, which have taken on a character at once more realistic and more sentimental, we find familiar pictures of courtly life. Woman now gets full standing in art. From Ming painting derives, at a considerable interval, the figure subjects on old blue porcelain. The Manchu emperors, who for more than two centuries have held the throne, have

in the main thrown their influence in favor of the imitation of Ming design, though there have also been partial revivals of the Sung manner. In the eighteenth century Chinese art becomes strongly realistic, carrying *genre* painting into all walks of life. Very ingenious and sprightly much of this work is, but it is inferior to similar Japanese painting and rather lacking in specific racial quality. This hurried chronological survey may introduce us to our real subject, the painting of the golden age—the Sung dynasty.

In the temple treasuries, museums, and private collections of Japan, there are more than two hundred paintings of the Sung and Yuan dynasties, while a scantier remnant persists in China itself and in the public and private collections of the West. The Boston Art Museum, the Freer Collection at Detroit, and the British Museum are among the richest in this art. The Musée Guimet also contains a few fine examples. Such admirable facsimiles as we have in *Kokka* and the *Select Relics*, published at Tokio, make Sung painting fairly accessible to all students. There are a very few early paintings that possibly antedate the Sung period, and strongly suggest a primitive Chinese art free from Buddhistic influence and

relatively realistic. Its existence is confirmed by those *genre* subjects in glazed terra cotta, of the Han dynasty (about the beginning of the Christian era), which have recently come to light. But the qualities of such underlying realistic painting must remain largely inferential. To the hieratic ideals of the Buddhist missionaries and the aristocratic formulas of the adepts of Confucius and Lao-tse, Chinese painting had yielded long before the, to us, merely traditional glory of the T'ang period (the seventh and eighth centuries). Of the severe splendor of the earliest hieratic painting, we have only Japanese echoes of later date. Still in the magnificent heroic figures of the Hôriuji Temple at Yamoto and the famous portable shrine of the same establishment we have paintings not later than the early years of the seventh century of our era, and, what is more important, exquisite works of an art still profoundly religious. To suggest the high qualities of these hieratic figures of incarnations of the Buddha, one is driven to ambitious analogies. Imagine a Crivelli purged of his smaller eccentricities, a Mantegna endowed with spirituality and freed from merely perfunctory dignity, and you will have some notion of the tingling austerity of this art, of the elaborate

beauty and significance of its line and color, of its tense and urbane spirituality. I fancy Giovanni Bellini, had he remained in his Mantegnesque phase and painted wall-decorations, might have done something as fine, but I cannot imagine any other artist of Europe meeting these Far Eastern mystics successfully on their own ground. Even in the superabundant scrolls of the centuries of decadence, some persistence of the solemn splendor of the parent art may be noted. At the risk of protesting overmuch, I must repeat that the value of this early hieratic art at its best is not relative, but absolute. Without pushing wide and futile comparisons, the seeker of the higher forms of beauty must acquaint himself with these rare survivals as he must familiarize himself with the pediments of Olympia, the mosaics of Ravenna, and the shattered portals of Rheims.

If the hieratic art of China and Japan finds its analogies in the great religious art of other periods, Chinese landscape-painting is a thing apart. No painting of landscape so fully realizes the profoundly psychological aphorism of Amiel that landscape is a state of mind (*un état de l'âme*). Occidental landscape-painting has never fully emancipated itself from the

requirement that it should be a record of facts. Hence, since large and comprehensive record is impossible, it has tended to limit itself to the picturesque bit. Our artists mostly prefer the thing that can be quite fully remembered and represented. A restricted kind of intimacy is their ideal. Now, the Chinese landscape-painter, dealing primarily with feelings about nature, naturally chose those aspects that evoke feeling most powerfully. Great expanses of plain rimmed by looming mountains, ravines widening out to river-valleys, perilous gorges were his favorite themes. The long scrolls upon which some of the earlier landscapes are painted represent, in a single work, nature in many aspects. One may unroll gradually and with delight quiet rivers with boating-parties, gardens with the pavilions of the rich, arable fields, temples, and usually there will be a mountain screen behind these foreground subjects, gaunt and formidable against the sky. As one plies the rolls, picture succeeds to picture in modulations expressing so many phases of the love of nature. I hardly know an occupation more soothing, more evocative of reverent contemplation, than such converse with a landscape scroll of good period. Such apparently naïve art prevails in virtue of fine selection

and prudent elimination, withal by concentration upon the significant facts of landscape—its scale and proper magnitude, the run of rivers, and the passing of winds.

Repeatedly the Chinese artists give us the simple theme of a hermit sage shadowed by a lone tree and seated in contemplation of sublime scenery. These tiny philosophers often choose the brink of abysses for their meditations, or gorges cooled by the spray of cataracts. What is remarkable in these pictures is the impregnation of the whole with the mood of the small figure. The balance of the contours of the ravine, the outreaching of trees from the crags, will seem merely the projection of the thinker's mood, or, conversely, he may be regarded merely as the incarnation of the spirit of the place. Such equilibrium between mood and fact is exquisitely maintained by the great Chinese painters and even by such gifted amateurs as the Emperor Huitsung, two of whose landscapes are included in Mr. Taki's album. In these pictures the landscape is reduced to its minimum expressive lines, mere things have been well-nigh eliminated, and we have the kind of prospect that might exist in a world of ideas before the actual gross substances of the earth had been created.

Early Chinese art offers as well landscape of a more literal sort. There are snow scenes, views of frozen lakes, and the like, presented with the finest atmospheric equilibrium and with an infallible sense of texture. Here the rhythm is usually in the third dimension, dependent on the accurate placing of significant objects in aerial perspective. Snow scenes ascribed to Li Ti and Ma Lin in Mr. Taki's book may best illustrate this comparatively objective phase of Chinese landscape. But here again the work is permeated with mood. Take the "Summer Landscape" in Viscount Okitomo Akimoto's collection ascribed to Kao Jan-hui. Nothing could be simpler than its ingredients. A cascade bordered by dark firs slips down in a double curve and forms a quiet pool. High above, beyond intervening mists, the shaggy shoulder of a mountain takes up the double curve and loses it again in the upper vapors. There is in these hints a sense of the secular life story of the rivulet, of its eroding task through the ages, of its kinship with fog and rain; and one hardly needs the temple on the nearest ridge to remind us that these immemorial processes are sacred. To a beginner in this art I especially recommend this beautiful painting, the spiritual quality of

which, together with its masterly and simple composition, must deeply affect any sensitive mind.

I can hardly dwell upon more deliberately fantastic and romantic phases of Chinese landscape-painting, though these are most interesting. Let me merely remark the sea-view ascribed to Chao Po-kiu, and illustrated in plate II of the Musée Guimet catalogue. Bare headlands rise like fangs against a rippled inland sound. In the interspaces are scant pine-trees. Beyond, two straits enclose an island which presents crags still more formidable to the sky. The sun touches the distant waters with broad, sullen streaks that are lustrous without brilliancy. Near by the wind crisps the water and urges tiny craft over the waste. Far away rules an ominous calm, and beyond a horizon lost in gloom there are faint but keen indications of an ultimate mountain ridge. The colors are a sombre blue and green, accented with black and gold. The whole impression is troubling and sinister in the extreme. One hardly needs the beautifully written note of a friendly critic, formerly custodian of this treasure, which informs us that

> In the sea there are great islands, the home of marine demons, of crocodile-men, of pearls, and fish of every sort.

These isles are rather lofty, and rise from amid the waves. One sees emerge the crags where the spirits dwell and where the birds which fly between heaven and sea perch and brood and raise their young.

In the attempt to get at the spirit of Chinese landscape I have intentionally carried into one category of expression works in color and works in India ink. The harm is the less because the Chinese in landscape use colors sparingly, often employing only two fundamental tones, and because they require of their draftsman in ink the illusion and richness of color itself. Dead ink is their strongest term of reproach, meaning ink carelessly and inexpressively applied. And their connoisseurs distinguish no less than five colors of ink, a refinement which, since the paper has a perceptible yellow quality and the ink a tendency to blue, is by no means imaginary. We shall do well to admit with the native critics that, although the simplest and most concentrated effects are attained in monochrome, the colored landscape has a wider range and a more accessible amenity. If a Westerner readily casts his vote with the devotees of ink, it is largely because such work suffers less in reproduction. Nor can I make much of the very interesting native division of all landscape-painting into

southern and northern, although this somewhat paradoxical distinction throws much light on Chinese ways of thought. The river scenery of the south abounds in sublime and sensational features, but southern painting is suave and gentle. Northern scenery is monotonous, but the northern style of painting is rugged, emphatic, overtly picturesque. The terms, then, correspond to nothing in Chinese geography, but to much in Chinese modes of feeling. The same painter under diverse inspiration will paint in the northern or in the southern manner. Sometimes critics object to the treatment of a northern subject with inappropriate southern suavity. The words, in short, present something like our own wide but ill-defined antithesis between the classic and romantic. We should not go far amiss if we said that *Goetz von Berlichingen* was in Goethe's northern manner; *Iphigenie* in his southern.

Nearly a thousand years ago the critic, Kuo Hsi, in his work, *The Noble Features of the Forest and the Stream*, expressed once for all the guiding sentiment of Chinese landscape-painting. He takes it as axiomatic that all gently disposed people would prefer to lead a solitary and contemplative life in communion

with nature, but he sees, too, that the public weal does not permit such an indulgence.

> This is not the time for us [he writes] to abandon the busy worldly life for one of seclusion in the mountains, as was honorably done by some ancient sages in their days. Though impatient to enjoy a life amidst the luxuries of nature, most people are debarred from indulging in such pleasures. To meet this want, artists have endeavored to represent landscapes so that people may be able to behold the grandeur of nature without stepping out of their houses. In this light painting affords pleasures of a nobler sort, by removing from one the impatient desire of actually observing nature.

Such a passage yields its full meaning only upon very careful reading. One should note the background of civilization, quietism, and rural idealism implied in so casual an expression as the "luxuries of nature." Nor should one fail to see that what is brought into the home of the restless worldling is not the mere likeness of nature, but the choice feeling of the sage. Again, the statement that the enjoyment of a thing merely symbolized and shadowed forth by the artist is nobler than the enjoyment of the thing itself should be duly weighed. Never, I think, did the Chinese fall into the recurrent Occidental confusion of means with ends by which art was thought to be mere imitation or conveyance of nature.

Hence, while Chinese landscape-painting is frequently tenuous, and almost always adapted to somewhat esoteric modes of feeling, it is almost never vulgar or inconsequential. Demand was made not upon the observational skill of the artist; that was simply taken for granted; but upon his inner resources. For five centuries and more the Chinese artist was worthy of such a challenge, and even in decadence he retained at least the forms and ceremony of the aristocratic mysticism of greater days.

II

JAPAN

Japanese painting, unlike its Chinese models, is perplexingly various. It tends ever to break aristocratic bounds and become widely representative of the people, it invents recondite forms of decoration, and creates a whole school of evasion. Almost in our own day it has developed extraordinary realistic resources. Its story is a bewildering tangle of revolutions, eclecticisms, reactions. We have to do with a more fiery race, less given to contemplation—a civilization in which taste vacillated ardently after the fashion of modern Paris. Again, we

find odd implications of art with politics. The upstart Ashikaga shoguns, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, take up the refinements of the Sung ink-tone manner, leaving the traditional polychromy to the old nobility. At many periods of Japanese art an excessive sensibility and cleverness prevail. Two centuries before Whistler, Kôrin represents a sumptuous and sophisticated simplicity in many fields of design. Utamaro anticipates by a hundred years the perverse languor of Aubrey Beardsley. The whole Fujiwara period, from the ninth through the twelfth century, seems to breathe the feverish, ambiguous charm of Provence of the troubadours. There is no extravagance of Western feeling that the Japanese have not sometime outdone. How pale our transcendentalists from Pythagoras to Emerson look beside those adepts of the Zen philosophy, who regarded words as an impediment to understanding and committed their doctrine to abrupt and ejaculatory fragments of phrases! The brittle stroke of the great painter Sesshu carries the Zenistic mood into the graphic arts. In short, while the Chinese artists in their most audacious eliminations and suggestions made the necessary compromises with Confucian common sense, the Japanese artists are abso-

lutists and their art seems to chafe restlessly at its bounds. Even to an eye unaccustomed to Far Eastern art, the sobriety of most Chinese painting will be apparent, whereas only upon full acquaintance will much of the best Japanese painting lose an initial flavor of caricature. Such observations are not made to minimize Japanese art. Precisely its variousness and the extravagance of its beauty commend it to us. It escapes our formulas, and through acquaintance with it our formulas may profitably be enlarged. Only a few salient characteristics of this variegated production can be treated within the measure of an essay.

From the coming of the Buddhist missionaries in the middle of the sixth century, for a hundred and fifty years, Japan gave herself to the assimilation of the monumental religious art of China. It has already been noted that our actual knowledge of the severe splendors of T'ang painting rests merely upon its echoes in Japan. And this imported hieratic art soon begins to assume a native character. A softer and more fantastic beauty appears in the placid faces of the Kwannon and the saints, more sumptuous forms of coloring and gilding announce a keener decorative intention; with the

growth of the minor Buddhistic pantheon and the adoption of native divinities by the new cult a complicated repertory of sacred subjects and personages is added to the simpler iconography inherited through China from India. A surging and somewhat tumultuous life, very unlike the gravity ever characteristic of China, is seeking expression. Bushido, the knightly code, self-immolation for punctilio, the gossamer intricacies of Zenistic morals and philosophy, are still far in the future, but already the extravagance of new feeling is surging within the old hieratic bounds. Some flicker of the ancient stateliness of the T'ang mood will persist for centuries; its mere shell is still erect to-day, but the soul of the people is elsewhere. A vigorous collective life unfit for the isolated and inaccessible virtues of the hermitage is now to draw the artist from the temple to the highway.

That peculiar sensibility which is the distinction of Japanese character is in many respects the product of the Fujiwara period, from the middle of the ninth to the end of the twelfth century. Under a refined and pleasure-loving aristocracy the fibre of the people was relaxed as its emotional life was extended. These were centuries of amazing talk, of skilfully culti-

vated hyperæsthesia. Already in earlier periods the roots of this ultrarefinement are to be found. The Empress Koken thus dedicated the field flowers to Buddha in lines still famous:

> If I pluck them, the touch of my hand will defile; therefore, standing in the meadows as they are, I offer these wind-blown flowers to the Buddhas of the past, the present, and the future.

We are already near the perilous brink of sentiment and sentimentality, and the Japan of Fujiwara will eagerly take the hazardous next step. Upon the fervors of this period it would be interesting to dwell. The excited throngs which followed eloquent priests recall similar scenes in Italy and France of the thirteenth century. But the Japanese adepts lack the savage energy of the European evokers of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, the Fujiwara mood is more closely allied to such organized languor as we find in the troubadours and the précieuses. The Land of Tenderness had been thoroughly charted in Japan some six hundred years before the geographical researches of Mlle. de Scudéry. Again, there are aspects of Fujiwara which anticipate Tarascon. We read of panoplied captains who could not mount their chargers. In general, reality was being

hard pressed by fair appearance. And this passing from the theological symbols to joy in appearance is what constitutes the new movement which was proudly called, in distinction from the imported styles, Yamoto, native Japanese.

The material of the Yamoto painters was men in collective action. Battles, pilgrimages, the bustle of civil and religious life are admirably treated in the few remaining scrolls of the Fujiwara period. And the endeavor of the artist is chiefly given to setting groups of men in their proper relation, in suggesting the joint action of the throng. Little attention is given to the individual. He becomes merely a term in an anecdote. In this respect Yamoto painting resembles closely the narrative Byzantine style with which it is exactly contemporary. The greatest exemplar of the narrative Byzantine tradition, Duccio of Siena, shows the same disregard for the form and physiognomy of individuals and the same tact in rendering the action and emotion of men in groups. In this social art Japan asserted her independence of China and renounced the severe individualism of the T'ang and early Sung styles. Yamoto painting overflowed its parent period, and dur-

ing the artistic reforms associated with the Kamakura régime (the thirteenth century) and that of the Ashikaga shoguns (from the fourteenth century through the sixteenth), the native narrative style persisted alongside the revived hieratic style and the refinements borrowed from late Sung painting. The Yamoto scrolls divide into a more ornate and a simpler class. On the one hand, we find an ideal chiefly decorative associated with utmost sumptuousness of color and gilding; on the other, a preoccupation with effective story-telling. Kano Sanraku, early in the seventeenth century, took up the ornate native style and re-established its honor. His admirable picture of the panic caused by the colliding wagons of the female admirers of the fair Prince Genji may be studied in Mr. Taki's album. For elaborate and fantastic movement it may be compared with certain pictures of Old Brueghel. The leader of the new popular or Ukiyo-ye school, Matahei, a younger contemporary of Sanraku Kano, is also a notable decorator, but, on the whole, derives from the simpler illustrative branch of the Yamoto tradition, of which Hokusai may be regarded as the last great exemplar.

It seems to me the singular merit of Mr.

Taki to have made clear the historic continuity between the revered Yamoto style and the too often contemned popular school. Very generally, the Japanese purists have condemned the Ukiyo-ye masters as triflers, or, worse, as traitors to the standards set by the priestly or Kano school. Such criticism emphasizes certain important facts. The popular school has had its defects of languor, of sentimentality, and of overemphasis. Its taste has wavered with its morals; it never has had the severe standards that have guided the Japanese revivers of the Sung style, nor yet the discretion that has characterized such uncompromising æsthetes as Sotatsu, Kôrin, and Hoitsu. But, while it is permissible to prefer these aristocratic manifestations of Japanese genius, it is obviously unfair to rule out an avowedly popular art for lack of aristocratic flavor. We do not hold it against Charles Keene that he failed to produce the "Tanagra" pastels of Whistler or the delightful mediævalisms of Burne-Jones; and I think we should be foolish to measure the charming masters of the color-prints against the esoteric refinement of Kôrin or the tenuous sublimity of Sesshu. And, while these humbler illustrators of Japan obviously fall short in specific Far Eastern

idealism, for that very reason they represent a very precious native quality—the capacity for finding beauty near at hand and in common things. They touch hands with generations of Japanese artisans who, through imitation, have achieved style—not the greatest style, but one infinitely adroit, winning, and pre-eminently Japanese.

The Kamakura shogunate witnessed a masculine reaction against Fujiwara sensibility, established the feudal ideal, and initiated the Samurai code of honor. Religion assumes a sterner cast. A tonic hero-worship pervades the islands. Portraiture begins to flourish alongside the old hieratic art, and the narrative style of Yamoto achieves new triumphs. A precious screen depicting the Heiji campaign, in the Boston Museum, shows the power of the military painters of this heroic age. Its triumphs, however, are in sculpture. Its painting chiefly infused a more manly spirit into existing forms. To the already ample iconography of Buddhism it adds hells of grotesque horror.

The sway of the Ashikaga shoguns corresponds significantly with the European Renaissance. It was a period when the Japanese

mind deliberately aroused and fortified itself by reperusal of the *Exemplaria Græca* of India and China. The new shoguns emulated the contemporary Medicis and Gonzagas in hospitality to new thought and exotic forms of beauty. The painter-priest Soami revives the Sung manner in etherealized form, and invents the art of planning gardens symbolically. Soon the refined monotony of the tea ceremony is reduced to a code, tea-houses arise in calculated and expensive simplicity. Humble brown tea-jars become priceless for accidents of potting and firing appreciable only by the elect. The Samurai conceal their magnificent sword-blades, the work of famous smiths, in simple wooden scabbards with the bark on. Beauty is achieved through renunciation.

In the Zen philosophy the soul of the time finds truest expression. Since the world is a flux, and nothing is permanent or valuable in itself, man must create within the vast illusion his own values and his personal sense of duration. Things are absolutely on a parity, equally important or equally negligible, as they are perceived. A philosopher must consent to the flux for the sake of great contemplative moments which may be snatched from the universal purposeless movement.

The smallest event will feed the thinking soul. Beauty must be sought where it lies obscurely. The obvious must be avoided. Amid illusion, the unlikeliest places may become our coign of vantage. Our part is to cultivate a precise gentleness and expectancy, never to force things or to pretend. The soul must borrow the honorable trenchancy, the veiled splendor of the sword. Excess is the most heinous vice. The Zen symbol for a wantonly foolish person was a monkey reaching down for the reflection of the moon in the water. If he succeeds, he shatters the beauty for which he stupidly yearned. Such is the penalty for grasping at illusion as if it were reality.

With the Zen priest Sesshu, whose activity covers the latter half of the fifteenth century, the theory of the flux produces works of art, the most durable and satisfactory that Japan can boast. Sesshu draws his inspiration from the India-ink painters of the early Sung dynasty. He made a triumphal progress through China, where his austere dexterity put to shame the trivial elegance of the contemporary Ming artists. Where Sesshu differs from his exemplars is in the impetuous economy of his stroke. He outdoes the Chinese at their own game of expressive syncopation. Few Western draw-

ings are so instinct with the actual nervous tension of the artist. The landscapes and the rare figure subjects of Sesshu reveal a disciplined breathlessness. He has pushed emotion to the breaking-point without losing control. One likes to think that he was the contemporary of Rogier de la Pasture, Sandro Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci.

There is in the Imperial Museum at Tokio a "Summer Landscape" by Sesshu which for generations served as a model for the Kano painters. In the foreground a few velvety dots and dashes indicate no definite form, but suggest keenly the sense of trees and shrubs pushing up from the water's edge. We have the feeling of growth abstracted from individual growing things. Above, twin crags loom thinly through mist that veils their roots. At the top of the tall strip a square mass of calligraphic writing repeats the tone and, in a manner, the strokes of the foreground. Such a picture is essentially a hieroglyph. A trained eye will yield to its fascination and will read something of its meaning; an untrained eye will make nothing of it whatever. In other moods Sesshu is vivid to the point of explicitness. There is a landscape scroll in the collection of Prince Motoakira Mori, the geological

precision of which rivals certain drawings of Dürer. A basaltic causeway zigzags back into the picture at the right. Its tip is tufted with strong cedars profiled against the sky, and a spur of rock overhangs a pagoda set on the edge of the central ravine. The gulf itself is full of mist, but tree tops rise into the light, and an exquisite pine shrub, caught in a crag at the left, seems to beckon to its great fellows below. Overlapping ridges cut across the ravine in the far distance. The pagoda is sketched with a crispness that makes it akin to the cedars and the neighboring crag; the basalt causeway gives the sense of actual mass and weight, of being deeply rooted below the inhabited surface of the earth. In such a picture the cosmic quality of Chinese landscape assumes a more individual and intense expression. No one who has seen this picture of Sesshu can forget it. Indeed, it will take its place with actual memories of nature. I shall be able to forget it only when I can forget how the buttresses of Staffa looked summers ago. All of the peculiar restrained energy of Japan is in the painting of Sesshu. It is he who best gives form to her tenuous yet potent idealism. Of the chivalry of the Ashikaga period he is the herald. His influence was potent through the century

that closed with the thunder of Hideyoshi's drums and the desperate emprise in Korea.

Sesson and the priestly school follow the example of Sesshu at a distance, or, rather, they modify his teaching by consulting his own early Chinese models. Sesson is in his degree a great painter; so are the two earlier Kanos, Masonobu and Montonobu. These men seek the energy of stroke of their great predecessor, but their quality is softer, their manner a little less spontaneous, and except for Sesson, who anticipates certain finesses of the æsthetic school of the seventeenth century, the Kanos tend to run out in a stereotyped pseudoclassicism. Near the end of the seventeenth century Kano Tanyu made superb imitations of Sesshu, but his resonant echo of Zen painting is exceptional. The heroic age of Japan was passing. The traditionalists of the Chinese manner are becoming a stale survival. An age of splendor and ease is to pervert the Zen teaching to Corinthian uses, and corresponding to this age a new and purely æsthetic school exempt from hieratic prescriptions and Chinese predominance.

With Sotatsu and Kôrin the new art of Japan is born—the art that, decadent, still holds the

bazaars; the art which in its eighteenth-century exuberance captured the imagination of Whistler and the Goncourts. How far Sotatsu and Kôrin drew upon the ornate Yamoto style, lately revived by Sanraku, what hints they took from the hieratic polychromy, it would be difficult to say. In any case, their screens display a sumptuousness of gold and pigment new even in Japan. Nature was surely their chief teacher. Her lovely textures, in water, bark of trees, softness of flowers, gloss of gourd and fruit, glint of metal and stone, they studied with passionate fidelity. Following nature again, they threw over the consecrated linear formula inherited from China, and painted, as nature herself paints, in lineless masses of tint and tone. Yet the art remains primarily decorative. Nature is used merely as a repertory of motives; the combination in the actual work of art is highly abstract and conventional. Certain refinements of tone and arrangement reach their limits in Sotatsu, Kôrin, and their eighteenth-century follower, Hoitsu. A kind of canon of asymmetry is attained. Compared with these men, Whistler seems merely a gifted amateur and lacking in precision of means. As a by-product, these men cultivated also the peculiar snobbisms of

the artistic temperament. Kôrin himself could paint only in full dress and seated upon a brocade cushion. "I must feel like a daimio while I create," he remarked. No man has gone further in seeking remote forms of beauty, no one has better illustrated the solitary, superior, antisocial conception of the artist, and the exquisiteness of his work partakes of decadence, and his influence soon led to mere ingenuity and prettiness. In the eighteenth century the æsthetic movement is already overripe; in the nineteenth the tenth-rate attenuations of Kôrin's manner will be hurried across the seven seas to satisfy the gimcrack seekers of the Western world. Like the rococo movement in Europe, we have a transient and most poignant grace, an assertion of the worth and the underlying sadness of pleasure, an ideal comprised in fine manners and chastened voluptuousness. But the rococo of France dies with Sedan, while that of Japan survives Port Arthur.

The real art of latter-day Japan, despite the purists, is not found in the various eclecticisms and revivals, but in the continued tradition of Ukiyo-ye. And now the popular school, which dominated the islands for the two hundred years preceding the death of

Hokusai, 1849, has in turn yielded the day. There have been heroic and meritorious efforts to revive the Zen manner, but these attempts have not reached the national consciousness. For three centuries, Japanese sentiment has been social and realistic, and it seems as if these motives must guide any artistic revival of national scope. It is to be hoped that Japan may content herself with her own tradition and that of kindred China. Could there be a greater calamity than that the nation which has produced the most splendid hieratic painting, the idealism of Sesshu, the æstheticism of Kôrin, the apostolic succession of illustrators from the pioneers of the Yamoto style to Hokusai, that this nation should consent to be artistically a provincial appanage of Paris? May that omen be averted, is the prayer of all catholic lovers of art.

In our rapid progress through the art of China and Japan, much has naturally been made of national differences. I may have given the impression that we are dealing with a very special sort of humanity beyond the reach of Western sympathy and understanding. Personally, I could wish that the Kiplingesque cant concerning East and West

might be abated, so that one could examine real differences without seeming to imply an impassable gulf. There is, as a matter of fact, nothing in the art of China and Japan that a person really trained in European art cannot appreciate. I mean a patient, open-minded person whose eye has kept something of the adventurous quality. In studying painting in its most diverse manifestations, I am increasingly impressed with the kinship existing between the finest things of whatever nation or time. The other day I noted the wind-blown reeds in the foreground of Ruysdael's "Mill" at Amsterdam, and was struck by a vague resemblance. The touch and the feeling, on reflection, were identical with that of certain reeds in a Kano painting on my own walls. Mr. Cortissoz in his delightful memoir of John La Farge tells how La Farge, as a fitting greeting for the Japanese critic Okakura Kakuzo, procured him the view of some fine Rembrandt etchings. To them the pilgrim knelt and said: "This is what the great Chinese black-and-white masters tried to do." And, indeed, the Far Eastern painters share Rembrandt's scorn of the unfelt and uninterpreted appearance, his passionate devotion to light and shade as conveyers of emotion, his love of the single

energetic stroke, his royal disregard of mere facts, his habit of painting with his soul.

In these essays on the painting of China and Japan, I have gladly taken the risks of an admiration as ignorant as it is profound. The facts I have perforce taken at second hand, and doubtless I shall have written much to make a judicious expert grieve. But there is nothing second-hand about the thrill these lovely works evoke. Any great expression of the human spirit must come home to a sensitive intelligence. The way to art is through art, and the critic is merely an explorer seeking new kindred for us. Later comes the ethnologist and measures their heads, an important but a colder process. As a belated explorer, then, my humble part is to say that this land is delectable and that all who really love their early Sienese painters, Mantegna, Botticelli, Rembrandt, may enter fearlessly.

III

COLOR-PRINTS OF JAPAN

This corrected and amplified translation of Von Seidlitz's standard work on Japanese prints[1] has the peculiar merit of endeavoring to make an æsthetic appraisal of the material. This needed badly to be done. Such English experts as Anderson and Strange have, on the whole, approached the subject in an antiquarian spirit, while Edmond de Goncourt and Bing merely confirmed the exaggerated vogue of Hokusai and Utamaro among the pioneer collectors. The late E. F. Fenollosa, in his remarkable catalogue, *The Masters of Ukiyo-ye*, 1896, was the first Western scholar to work through the entire field from the point of view both of history and pure criticism. His work, since it was merely a catalogue for a loan exhibition, has never had its due recognition, and Von Seidlitz deserves credit for accepting so candidly the judgments of his American predecessor. The emphasis of the present work, then, is precisely where Fenollosa laid it, on Kiyonaga and his eighteenth-century

[1] *A History of Japanese Colour-Prints.* By W. von Seidlitz. Translated by Anne Heard Dyer and Grace Tripler. J. B. Lippincott Co.

precursors. Here is Fenollosa's rating, which our author apparently accepts: Of first rank as artists are the precursor Matahei, Okumura Masonobu, Harunobu, Kiyonaga, and Hokusai. Such favorites as Koriusai, Utamaro, and Shuncho are relegated to second place, while to the heroes of many of us, Toyokuni of the actors and Hiroshige of the landscapes, is grudgingly awarded third rank. The early nineteenth-century prints that are the staple of the market, Kunisada, Kuniyoshi, etc., Fenollosa left in the limbo of the fourth class. This book, then, reaffirms a quite definite scale of values which the enthusiast may do well to consider. It indicates that, with the exception of Europe's first Japanese love, Hokusai, the tendency has been to collect the prints of minor importance. To possess Utamaro, Toyokuni, and Hokusai, with Hiroshige as a second choice, is still the ambition of the average amateur.

Now, it is no wonder that the pioneers, the Goncourts, Duret, Gonse, Whistler, Alfred Stevens, and our own John La Farge and Russell Sturgis should have been enraptured by the first prints that came over. These earliest importations included the giant Hokusai, but, for that matter, what Fenollosa scornfully calls

a fourth-rate print was an infinitely refreshing apparition in the heyday of Victorian and Third Empire art. If the pioneers had not loved the languid Utamaro too much, should we now be devotees of Kiyonaga? Will our successors in turn have passed altogether beyond eighteenth-century Japan?

A Japanese amateur would be in no doubt as to the answer. For him the cult of an art which he regards as vulgar both in its spirit and processes is a deplorable aberration. We face the disquieting paradox that an art which no native adept takes quite seriously has captured the finest connoisseurs of the Western world. Who is right? Or is there some misunderstanding that puts both East and West partly in the wrong? Is there perhaps a common ground on which the shades of John La Farge and Okakura Kakuzo might meet? These questions are all important, but have never been fairly met. Here they naturally cannot be elucidated, yet the hint of a compromise may be given. To do this we must understand the position of the Japanese connoisseur. He scorns the color-prints, first because they represent for him a decadent school. Ukiyo-ye (the fleeting world) is for him an unworthy subject.

He condemns the practitioners of the style, both for their vulgarity and frivolity. They stand apart from that idealism which is the soul of Japan. Hear Mr. Okakura:

> The Popular School, though it attained skill in color and drawing, lacks that ideality which is the basis of Japanese art. Those charmingly colored woodcuts, full of vigor and versatility, made by Utamaro, Shunman, Kiyonobu, Harunobu, Kiyonaga, Toyokuni, and Hokusai, stand apart from the main line of development of Japanese art, whose evolution has been continuous ever since the Nara period. . . . Great art is that before which we long to die. But the art of the late Tokugawa period only allowed a man to dwell in the delights of fancy. It is because the prettiness of the works of this period first came to notice, instead of the grandeur of the masterpieces hidden in the daimios' collections and the temple treasures, that Japanese art is not yet seriously considered in the West.

Here we have to do with a condemnation both æsthetic and patriotic. The absolute superiority of the traditional schools of painting is asserted, and Ukiyo-ye is regarded as a defection from sound national ideals. In the same spirit purists have ruled out the "gallant school" of eighteenth-century France as essentially frivolous or vulgar. And the *école galante* has so many affinities with Ukiyo-ye that we may say that to condemn Kiyonaga one must logically scorn Watteau, while Utamaro

and Fragonard must stand or fall together, both being consummate interpreters of those women whose forte is a refined sensual charm. Here we reach an ineluctable issue of principle. Is it possible honestly to like the severe portraiture of Philippe de Champaigne and the coquettish designs of Eisen, the noble abstract landscape of Sesshu, and the more literal transcripts of Hiroshige? Impressionist critics have denied that the same heart can honestly harbor these discrepant pleasures, and, clearly, the Japanese heart cannot. In the West, however, taste requires no such exclusive and doctrinal devotion. The sincerity of Théophile Gautier will hardly be impugned, and he knelt impartially at the shrines of Ingres and Delacroix. More significantly, Fenollosa, of all students of the ancient traditional painting of Japan the most learned and sympathetic, was also a most discriminating admirer of the masters of Ukiyo-ye. We might add that connoisseurs who, like C. L. Freer, have sought out the finest scrolls of the earlier centuries have remained unabated enthusiasts for the eighteenth-century masters. In short, the finest Western taste is flexible enough to admit the superior glories of traditional painting in Japan and still to love both the exquisite craftsman-

ship and the infinite human variety of the smaller art of the popular school. We evidently face one of those ultimate antitheses of race which may hardly be adjusted. Let the Oriental beware lest logical severity deprive him of some excellent pleasure, and the Occidental lest in the easy fringe of his standards more undesirable visitants than Utamaro and Fragonard find a lodging.

Admitting once for all the technical and spiritual superiority of older Japanese painting, the color-prints, both on the side of craftsmanship and subject, make an irresistible appeal to the catholic collector. As superb facsimiles after great designers, these sheets far outrank, in merely technical interest, the woodcuts after Dürer and Holbein. The cotton paper, once impregnated with pigment, gains a peculiar loveliness of texture, a chastened brilliancy quite its own. The impressions which are made without a press, by careful padding, yield an extraordinary variety of velvety black lines, cunningly varied flat tints, and even embossing of a most restrained elegance, serving merely as accent. The linear pattern is conducted scrupulously in calligraphic swirls, which yet give the character

of the subject; every trick of repetition, opposition, and counterpoise is practised, and the effect remains delightfully simple and clear. Upon this carefully arranged and ever-rhythmical foundation of continuous black lines is superimposed a bolder system of color masses. Nobody has understood the art of balanced spots as the painters and printers of Japan. Harmony is secured first by an instinctive equilibration of these flat masses of color, and, again, though the procedure is never allowed to annul the broad contrasts of color, by introducing a little of the neighboring hues in each mass. These humble workmen employ more flexibly that instinctive, almost mathematical, color-sense which we note in the rug-weavers of the Nearer East, a faculty which has been vouchsafed but sparingly to Europe since Gothic times.

How subtly intellectual the composition of these unpretentious subjects is may be judged from the fact that the single sheets which have delighted European amateurs often turn out to be merely detached members of compositions of two, three, or more sheets. The arrangement is so planned as to be perfect, whether in the single prints or the ensemble. As regards the mind, the isolated sheet may

be incomplete; as regards the eye it is unitary. Evidently, the successful articulation of compositions complete in themselves requires forethought and shrewd calculation. Formulas may help somewhat, but in technical resources the artists of the popular school are not inferior to the great masters of the earlier centuries. Even the purists, like Mr. Okakura, admit this, and merely deplore the inferior inspiration of the realists. As masters of composition, these popular artists are perhaps most engaging in those tall strips called *kakemonos*. Within these strait limits they will set a figure and accessories, sometimes several figures, horses, boats, always without crowding and always with regard to the vertical scheme. Here they achieve not merely remarkable feats in perspective, but do wonders in making figures fully expressive and satisfactory though cut into by the frame. One does not need to go to the master in this kind, Koriusai, nor yet to the rare *kakemonos* of Harunobu and Kiyonaga; the later men will supply admirable examples. There is, for example, a Yeizan print of a Samurai with his bride, half-length figures, each with a hawk on wrist, in which the pattern undulates through curved wing and back of the falcons and tilted heads of the

hunters, being held true to the vertical by spacious masses of blue. Such variety within a formal scheme is characteristic of all genial design, and especially of that of Japan.

For such reasons any lover of beautiful design, not bound by an exclusive æsthetic, will perforce admire and, as he may, possess Japanese color-prints. It is true that the enthusiasm for them is still somewhat indiscriminating. Secondary artists are exalted, and mediocre prints are sold at absurd prices, but the amateur who is lucky enough to acquire Kiyonaga, Harunobu, or Masonobu, and is clever enough to discern good Hokusai from poor, to cull out the really desirable sheets of Utamaro, Kuniyoshi, and Hiroshige—such an amateur will not have either æsthetic or financial cause to regret his foible for the school of the fleeting world.

Since monetary value depends largely on condition, and the slightest defect in register or inequality in printing rules a print out, it is regrettable that Von Seidlitz has not laid greater stress on this matter. Happily, the cult of condition plays into the hands of the impecunious collector. He buys for a dollar or two the prints which in immaculate state are held in the hundreds. Only let him not

persuade himself or his wife that, fiscally speaking, he is getting bargains. Artistically, there is much to be said for the poor print. Its defects are often microscopic, while frequently it has acquired through age and wear an adventitious beauty all its own. The present writer knows of a smoked and browned Koriusai which, though the learned deny it, is æsthetically a "unique example." In the gift and anniversary sheets, *surimono*, the dexterity of the color-printers appears at its height. They love to powder the paper with sparkling foil or mica. Of these charming confections our author is somewhat scornful, considering them overelaborate in polychromy and embossing. *Surimono* are, as a matter of fact, so hard to come by that nobody really needs to be warned against them; moreover, with some tendency to fussiness, they contain some of the masterpieces of Ukiyo-ye. A most delicate ingenuity is employed in hinting at favorite occupations or depicting favorite instruments of the person complimented.

From the early seventeenth century, when the painter Matahei founded the popular school, through the years when black or hand-colored prints were the rule, to the beginnings,

with three pigments, of true color-printing, and Harunobu's invention of the five-color blocks, in 1765, Von Seidlitz conducts the reader cautiously and with tact. Due stress is laid upon the close relation of book illustration to the derivative art. The ultimate complication of the color schemes in the artists of the early nineteenth century is condemned as sterile virtuosity. The most famous works are listed, and many signatures are reproduced. This book, in short, while in no sense a complete catalogue, is an agreeable introduction to the subject, and a useful manual for the collector. If he adjusts his standards by it he will not go far wrong; for more detailed information a friendly Japanese adviser is better than many books. Fenollosa's catalogue is inaccessible and heavy reading. To study it in a print collection would be a liberal education in this branch. Next to this course would be to buy and read this excellent book which has embodied so much of Fenollosa's teaching.

As for the fleeting world of eighteenth-century Japan, a visit to it involves some hazard of bad company. It is a chance, however, that an adventurous spirit will take cheerfully. The courtesan, parading, dressing, bathing,

reading romances, bulks pretty large in this world. But her appeal is so demure and hieratic that only a very uneasy conscience could resent her presence. She fits naturally and quite modestly into a human scheme that includes chivalric heroes, samurai hunting or in other rural disport, workmen at their trades, hardy fishermen and peddlers with their sumpter beasts, actors in rigid yet expressive poses, prosperous folk on water-parties, children at play, toilers in the rice swamps—of this motley world she is in a manner the queen, but she rather partakes of its decorous gayety than communicates her own corruption. Utamaro in his later work has given her a portentous and graceful melancholy. Her features are elongated and rounded with a paradoxical resemblance to a saint of Simone Memmi. And this pathetic conception of the woman of pleasure, corresponding to the end of the great century, means that the glory of Ukiyo-ye has passed into decadence. There will still be place for the robust illustration of Hokusai; Hiroshige, and occasionally Kuniyoshi, will yet give us visions of that solemn Japan of forest and mountain that overlooks eternally the fleeting world of city and coast, but the vein that has produced for nearly two centuries is exhausted. The

fleeting world will lack its artist chroniclers; Fuji will aspire in the distance and will be stencilled on a million pots for the delectation of the careless foreigner, but no Hokusai will inwreathe that sacred cone with expressive arabesques every element of which is an idiomatic trait of Japanese life. Ukiyo-ye is dead, as dead as the fêtes of Watteau and frolics of Fragonard, but it keeps a kind of life in those who love the human show and value the exquisite gesture with which a disciplined hand obeys the orders of a seeing eye. And as for the issue of frivolity, a fleeting world in the flesh or on paper must contain much to offend a moralist, but a fleeting world that wants to be exquisitely depicted is for the artist at least a most serious and consoling reality, and by the time the overt frivolity of his subject-matter has filtered through his imagination the residuum should be limpid enough for a stoic. Real vision and imagination are always antiseptic. Surely we must count Watteau a serious artist—and Kiyonaga.

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